COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

HOW JEWS TRANSFORMED THE COMIC BOOK INDUSTRY!

THE CONCLUSION

December 2004
No. 118
$6.95 U.S./$10.45 Can.
GEMSTONE PUBLISHING

SELL ON COMICLINK.COM

CGC-GRADED COMICS
GOLDEN, SILVER AND BRONZE AGE COMICS
VINTAGE COMIC ART

IMMEDIATE CASH FOR COLLECTIONS

CGC UNIVERSAL GRADE
12¢
the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN
2 GREAT FEATURE-LENGTH SPIDER-MAN THRILLERS!
THE FANTASTIC FOUR THINK I'M TRAPPED! BUT THEY DON'T SUSPECT MY REAL POWER!
EXTRA ADDED ATTRACTION! SPIDER-MAN MEETS THE FANTASTIC FOUR! AS "the CHAMELEON STRIKES!"

- Exclusive network of collectors paying top dollar
- Maximize your profit on every item
- Buyers are waiting for your highest quality items
- List items in real-time for free
- List in both For Sale/Bid and Auction sections
- We handle large and small collections
- Diverse selling options to fit your specific needs
- Pricing experts can maximize value
- Grading experts can grade your comics
- Direct selling option also available

CREDENTIALS: President Josh Nathanson is an Overstreet Advisor and writes resale reports for Comic Buyer's Guide and Overstreet Price Review.

ComicLink

THE INTERNET COMIC BOOK EXCHANGE

www.comiclink.com

Phone: 516-466-2770 Email: buysell@comiclink.com

All characters ©2004 respective copyright holders. All rights reserved.

BUY AND BID ON COMICLINK.COM

CGC-GRADED COMICS
GOLDEN, SILVER AND BRONZE AGE COMICS
VINTAGE COMIC ART

SPECIALIZING IN VINTAGE COMICS

CGC UNIVERSAL GRADE
HERE COMES... DAREDEVIL
THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR!
SPIDER-MAN
NOW WE CONTINUE THE MIGHTY MARVEL TRADITION WITH... DAREDEVIL!
FANTASTIC FOUR!
CAN YOU GUESS WHY DAREDEVIL IS DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER CRIME-FIGHTERS...?

- Huge Vintage CGC-Graded selection (1,000's)
- Vast Golden, Silver and Bronze Age selection
- Want List Service that really works
- New listings every day throughout the day
- Real-time For Sale/Bid and Auction sections
- Free expert investment advice
- Free condition verification service
- Fraud protection
- Satisfaction guarantee

CREDENTIALS: President Josh Nathanson is an Overstreet Advisor and writes resale reports for Comic Buyer's Guide and Overstreet Price Review

ComicLink

THE INTERNET COMIC BOOK EXCHANGE

www.comiclink.com

Phone: 516-466-2770 Email: buysell@comiclink.com

All characters ©2004 respective copyright holders. All rights reserved.

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

A GEMSTONE PUBLICATION

Vol. 3 No. 118

December 2004

FEATURES

21 **Major Malcolm Wheeler Nicholson**
A major disaster, by **Will Murray**

26 **How Jews Transformed the Comic Book Industry**
Part III: The Bronze Age (1979-Present) by **Arie Kaplan**

42 **Thomas Yeates on Al Williamson: Hidden Lands**
Interview by **Bill Baker**

44 **American Flagg!**
A bleeding heart patriot, by **Will Murray**

54 **Robot Dawn**
The color of metal, by **Will Murray**

COLUMNS

8 **Nolan's Notebook**
Three summer discoveries, by **Michelle Nolan**

14 **Weird Words**
Groo fights hate, by **Pat Calhoun**

18 **Inspiration Central: Thomas Yeates**
Interview by **Bill Baker**

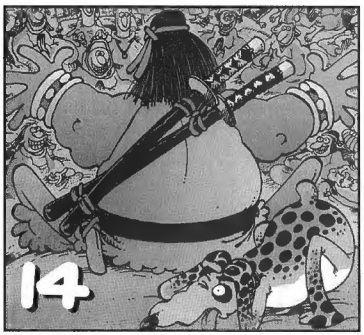
68 **The Naiman Report**
by **Michael Naiman**

70 **CBM MarketWatch and Market Reports**
Sampling marketplace indicator sales, compiled by **Michael Naiman**

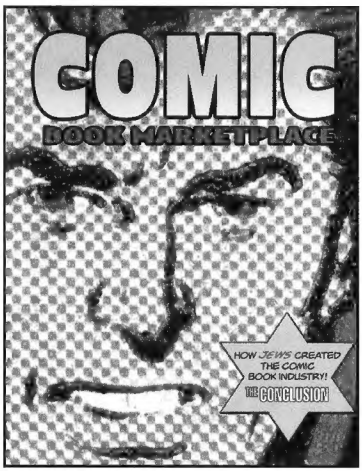
76 **That Wonderful Year**
This month it's 1962, by **Michelle Nolan**

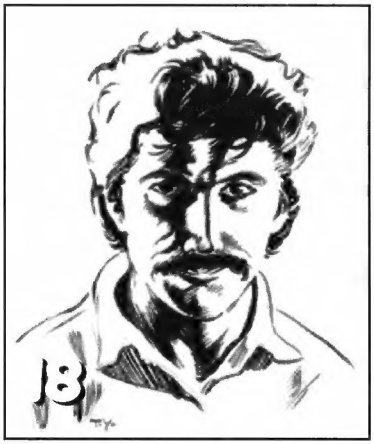
78 **Book Review,** by **Will Murray**
Men of Tomorrow: Geeks, Gangsters and the Birth of the Comic Book, by Gerard Jones

80 **Obituaries**
Irwin Donenfeld and Bob Haney

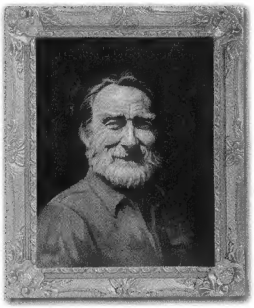


COVER:
Superman TM and © DC Comics.





PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Comic Book Marketplace – Gemstone Publishing, Inc.
copyright ©2004 Stephen A. Geppi, all rights reserved under international and Pan-American copyright conventions. The information in this publication is protected under U.S. copyright law. Absolutely no part of this publication may be reproduced in any form whatsoever (including mechanically, photographically, and/or electronically), without the prior written consent of the publisher. All articles and columns are the express opinion of the individual contributing artists and authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Gemstone Publishing, Comic Book Marketplace, its staff, or its advertisers. All characters, names, logos, trademarks, and symbols depicted and/or described in articles and other editorial material are owned and copyrighted by their individual companies.
Inquiries regarding advertising should be addressed to: telephone (800) 322-7978. Inquiries regarding this publication and letters to the editor should be addressed to: Comic Book Marketplace, c/o Gemstone Publishing, Inc. (Missouri), PO Box 469, West Plains, MO 65775-0469, telephone (417) 256-2224 FAX (417) 256-5555. 12 issue subscription $70 (residents of Missouri and Maryland add applicable sales tax); $75 (Canada and Mexico, US funds); $130 (United Kingdom and Western Europe, US funds); $145 (Japan and Philippines, US funds). Advertising and subscription rates may change without notice. Issue Number 118, December 2004.



The Evolution of a Collector II

Last month, in this space, I talked about how all of us collector-types are, by nature, obsessive. This tendency drives us in most areas of our lives, and for most of us the "wheels are always turning." There is never a time during our waking moments, when we are not thinking, thinking, thinking…and I suppose this continues even after we go to sleep at night.

I am one of the millions of us who has been blessed or cursed with this condition. There's nothing I can do about it, it seems. I can go down to the river and just sit there, watching the river go by, and my mind will be racing from one thought to another, taking inventory of all the things I know I need to worry about. I guess you have to learn to live with it, and try your best to direct your obsessive thoughts in a positive direction.

For me, up to the age of 26, my obsessiveness was directed towards my performance in school, resulting in making top grades in my class through high school, college and graduate school. But then after getting my Ph.D. in 1964 and starting a career as a university professor, my obsession for studying suddenly vanished. I decided then that it was not my subject matter (physics) that I had been obsessing about, it was the grades, and now that school was over for me, I had no real interest in pursuing a career in either physics or in teaching.

During the summer of 1964, just after getting my doctorate, I went up into the attic of my parents' home here in West Plains and found my old wooden box full of EC Comics, still padlocked after all those years. For some reason, when I "outgrew" comic books, I built a wooden box with a lid, placed all my ECs in it, and padlocked it. Sure enough, all my other comic books disappeared, either thrown away by my mother or scavenged by my two younger brothers. But not the ECs. They were all here. I remember spending several hours that hot summer day in the attic, rediscovering how great the ECs had been.

But out of approximately 300 EC Comics published, I had only about 200 of them. I was missing the earlier (1950-1951) issues, which were published before I discovered ECs. Back then, in the early 1950s, it didn't even occur to me that I might be able to locate those earlier issues.

Simultaneous with this, at the local drug store I had been seeing the novels of Edgar Rice Burroughs on the paperback rack. I was drawn to them both by my love of Tarzan and by those fantastic cover paintings by Frank Frazetta and Roy G. Krenkel, and I started reading them. In several of them I found an introduction written by Camille Cazedessus, Jr., publisher of *ERBdom*, a fanzine. Until then, I never knew that fanzines existed. So I wrote for a sample issue, and before long I had discovered "fandom". And my obsessive streak started to turn in that direction.

[to be continued]

Russ Cochran
Editor & Publisher

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

STEPHEN A. GEPPI
President and Chief Executive Officer

JOHN K. SNYDER, JR.
Chief Administrative Officer

RUSS COCHRAN
Editor & Publisher

J.C. VAUGHN
Associate Publisher

ARNOLD T. BLUMBERG
East Coast Editor

MICHAEL KRONENBERG
Art Director and Cover Designer

MICHELLE NOLAN, WILL MURRAY
BILL BAKER, PAT CALHOUN
JON BERK, PAUL GRAVETT
R.C. HARVEY, DAN JOHNSON
STEVE KRONENBERG, MARK SQUIREK
S.C. RINGGENBERG, BHOB STEWART
JOHN STUART JR, MIKE WILBUR
Contributors

PRICING & MARKET REPORTS
ROBERT M. OVERSTREET
Senior Pricing Editor

MICHAEL NAIMAN
Market Reports Editor
mnaiman1@cox.net

MARK HUESMAN
Pricing Coordinator
feedback@gemstonepub.com

ADVERTISING
ANGELA MEYER
Traffic & Operations Manager
ec@gemstonepub.com
Toll Free (800) 322-7978

BRENDA BUSICK
Creative Director
bbrenda@gemstonepub.com

RESEARCH
JOE McGUCKIN
mjoe@diamondgalleries.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE & ADMINISTRATION
JUDY GOODWIN
Customer Service Manager
cbm@gemstonepub.com
Toll Free (800) 322-7978
Or (417) 256-2224

INVEST IN THE BEST.

The long-standing leader in high-quality archival supplies, E. Gerber Supply Products understands why every one of its valued customers is serious about this deceptively simple sentiment. Why else would they choose its archival products – the finest preservation and storage supply products on the market – to keep their collectibles pristine and resistant to the ravages of age?

Top of the Line Preservation And Storage Supplies
E. Gerber PRODUCTS
...At The Lowest Prices

The answer is simple:

E. Gerber Supply Products offers serious protection for the serious collector. And its customers only demand the best. **Shouldn't you?**

Gerber's New Graded Comics Storage Box
Easy as CGC, 1-2-3!

Make it easy to store and transport comics that have been rated by Comics Guaranty, LLC (CGC)!

- Measures 15" x 8 ½" x 13"
- Holds up to 30 CGC-"slabbed" comics
- Durable construction withstands 200 pounds of pressure

Order more and save!

Quantity	Cost Per Box	S&H
1-9	$4.50 each	$8.00
10-49	$3.30 each	$20.00
50+	$2.75 each	$40.00

Top of the Line Preservation And Storage Supplies
E. Gerber PRODUCTS
...At The Lowest Prices

The Best Protection at the Best Price!

For a complete list of our affordable archival products, call us toll-free at **1-800-79-MYLAR** from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, or mail your request to:

E. Gerber Products ● 1720 Belmont Avenue ● Suite C ● Baltimore, MD 21244
Fax: 1-410-944-9363 ● e-mail: archival@egerber.com

www.egerber.com

Marketplace Mail

CBM reserves the right to edit letters selected for publication for length and/or content. Send communications to: Comic Book Marketplace, PO Box 469, West Plains, MO 65775, or e-mail us at cbm@gemstonepub.com.

The word

I just wanted to thank Russ, Angela Meyer, and Michael Kronenberg for doing such an amazing job reprinting my "How Jews Created the Comic Book Industry" series (originally titled "Kings of Comics"). The layout is extraordinary, and I'm awed at the number of archival photos and vintage illustrations you used to illustrate the article (I've only seen the reprint of part one so far).

I specifically enjoyed seeing the photo of Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster alongside Jerry Robinson and Neal Adams, who worked so hard to get Siegel and Shuster's "created by" credit restored for their character Superman. The pic of Doctor Occult dressed in a cape, the panel of the black space explorer from Weird Fantasy, the caricature of Siegel and Shuster, the diagram pointing out Bill Finger's contributions to the Batman costume…at the risk of gushing, let's just say I can't wait for part two. And that photo of Conrad Veidt, looking oddly like Phyllis Diller? Spooky, to say the least.

I also like that there were photos of the writers, editors and cartoonists themselves accompanying the article, so readers could put a face to a name. I really wanted a lot of these illustrations and photos to accompany the series when it was originally published by *Reform Judaism Magazine*, but because of space restrictions, there were only so many illos allowed (no disrespect to *Reform Judaism*). However, with a mag called "Comic Book Marketplace," you pretty much have free reign, and it couldn't make me happier.

As someone who grew up reading your reprints of the various EC titles (and who now writes for the last surviving EC title, *MAD Magazine*!), I consider it a nice feather in my cap to have a place in *CBM*. It took about a year and a half to interview all the veteran comics professionals who were gracious enough to take part in this series, and I hope it shows. Now it seems the series is being presented the way I'd always envisioned it. Thanks for thinking of me; I really appreciate it.

MAD-ly,
Arie Kaplan
www.ariekaplan.com

Arie, you are the one who deserves thanks for writing such an insightful and interesting article. When I read it, it resonated with me and I knew I had to do something with it in CBM*, and with the talented assistance of our designer, Michael Kronenberg, I am very proud to have these three articles in* CBM*. I am sure my old friend and mentor Bill Gaines would have loved it, too. Thanks for your good work. I believe I am prouder of these issues than any of the previous issues of* CBM*. And now for another opinion.*

RC

The look

Received the latest *CBM* with "How Jews Created the Comics." While I have read the article before, the graphic presentation in the mag was chaotic and disorganized to the point of distracting from the text. Hopefully, the person who has done a magnificent job in the previous issues on specialty color piece articles can be utilized to do the other two forthcoming parts. Gotta get my editing practice in there somewhere! Best,

Michael Naiman
via e-mail

Michael, your letter surprises me! I thought Michael Kronenberg's layouts were right on the money. I agree that they were not subdued—they were (ZAP!) in the true (POW!) comic book tradition. And you should know that the article was designed by the same Michael Kronenberg whose work you have enjoyed and praised in previous issues! I hope you'll take another look at it when you're in a more receptive mood. Yours was the only negative letter we received about issue #116.

RC

The Mona

The monthly fanzine continues to be my *favorite* magazine on the comics! Always enjoy the "Golden Age" era of comic books! Thanks!

Mad Mona
San Antonio, TX

Mona, I always appreciate getting your letters, sometimes with a wooden nickel included. I wish we had a thousand Mad Monas reading and enjoying CBM*.*

RC

The piece

Regarding Gary Swaf's letter [*CBM* 116], the story sounds like Ralph Reese's "The Skin Eaters." The story was originally published in *Web of Horror* #1 and subsequently reprinted in Eclipse's *Reese's Pieces* #2 in 1985, with

TM and © Marvel Characters, Inc.

40s, 50s, 60s comics galore!

- Thousands of Hard-to-Find Comics
- Easy-to-use website
- FREE US shipping w/ $25 order!
- FREE Panelography CD-ROM
- Come visit us at . . .

www.HouseofComics.com

email: info@houseofcomics.com tel: 510-849-2094

added color, which would probably be cheaper than the original. I've attached a jpeg of the last page, so that Gary doesn't waste his money if I've got the wrong story. Regards,

Frank Wilmot
via e-mail

DADDY, LOOK! THEY'RE MOUNTING A DEAD MAN'S HEAD! WOW! THAT'S TRUE SPORT! HUGH! CAN WE GO, TOO? PLEASE, DADDY...
NO, SON...
THEY DON'T NEED OUR HELP, IT'S JUST A GHOST, HONEY! ACTUALLY THERE'S SOME MONEY IN IT FROM SELLING THE HOPES!
CAREFUL, FRANK, DON'T HANDLE HIM! AND WATCH THOSE TEETH!
BABY NOW, HE IS A REAL BEAUTY!
THIS LITTLE ONE WILL BE PERFECT FOR GLOVES!
DADDY IS IT TRUE THAT DESERT MEN USED TO BE LIKE US?
YOU MEAN, HUMAN? OF COURSE NOT! THEY WERE A DIFFERENT RACE!
THE THEORY WAS PROBABLY MADE UP BY CONSERVATION-MINDED PEOPLE TO HUNT THEM... BUT THEN WHERE WOULD YOU GET THAT VEST, DON'T?
AIN'T A SCRAPPER, THAT BIG ONE WAS!
YEAH! LET'S GO GET SOME GRUB!
COULD WE GO HUNTING SOMETIME, DADDY?
I DON'T KNOW, SON... I DON'T THINK IT'S WRONG OR ANY-THING LIKE THAT, IT'S JUST THAT SOME-HOW...
FOR THE HUNTER... AND FOR THE TINY ONE THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN A HUNTER. IT'S THE END OF TIME, THE END OF MAN. AS FOR THE OTHERS, WHO CAN SAY WHAT MAN HE ISN'T? HE SIMPLY THE ANIMAL THAT CALLS ITSELF HUMAN?

The skinny

I noticed the letter from Aiden Whitty in *CBM* #116, voicing his distress over some mis-identifications of cover artists that Steve Kronenberg made about "Brand X" horror covers in a previous article. Aiden is correct in noticing that the covers to *Black Cat Mystery* #41 and #42, and the *Chamber of Chills* #13 cover are all drawn by the same artist. That artist is Al Avison! I verified this information many years ago with Harvey Art Director (and all-around diversified artist) Warren Kremer. Kremer actually designed many of Harvey's horror covers for the other artists working there and on occasion contributed covers himself.

I agree with Aiden's comment about Howard Nostrand and Bob Powell. They were two of the finest artists working at Harvey Publishing on the horror books during the 1950s. He asked if they had ever teamed up. Well, the truth is, before coming to Harvey, Nostrand and Powell worked together—with two other artists—in Bob Powell's studio on Long Island. About a year after Powell landed the Harvey account, Nostrand decided to break out on his own and left the studio. At this time his style developed even further and he became one of Harvey's most popular artists.

In regards to his question about the censorship of EC's covers. I asked Bill Gaines about this back in 1992. His answer was that during 1954, as pressure mounted against EC and their line of horror and crime comics from several different directions, he decided to have his lawyer start advising him when they went over the line a bit too much on covers. Bill or Al knew when they were pushing the envelope on gory covers and would submit cover proofs to the lawyer for his opinion. The lawyer would advise them accordingly. As far as I know, the lawyer objected to three covers, causing them to be censored/altered. These covers were: *Crime SuspenStories* #22, *Tales From the Crypt* #38 and *The Vault of Horror* #32. Hope this helps. Best,

Roger Hill
Wichita, KS

Thanks for the input, Roger. Roger and I have been friends since the mid-1960s and fellow EC Fan-Addicts since we were in diapers. By the way, Roger has just issued his new color EC fanzine, EC Fan-Addict, *and was kind enough to send me a couple of copies for review. We will be doing that review soon in* CBM. *Good job, Rog!*

RC

The family

I read with great interest Part 1 of the article on Judaism in the Comic Industry. It was especially significant to me on a personal level, as I knew many of the people mentioned and had heard first hand through Bill of the incidents cited.

I feel sure that if Bill were alive he would especially be delighted with it, as would Max.

I look forward to reading Parts 2 and 3. Sincerely,

Nancy Gaines
via e-mail

This is high praise, indeed, coming from the former Mrs. Bill Gaines. Nancy was also a part of the early EC scene, working in the EC office at 225 Lafayette before she married Bill. Thank you, Nancy—this means a lot to me personally to know that you appreciated these issues.

RC

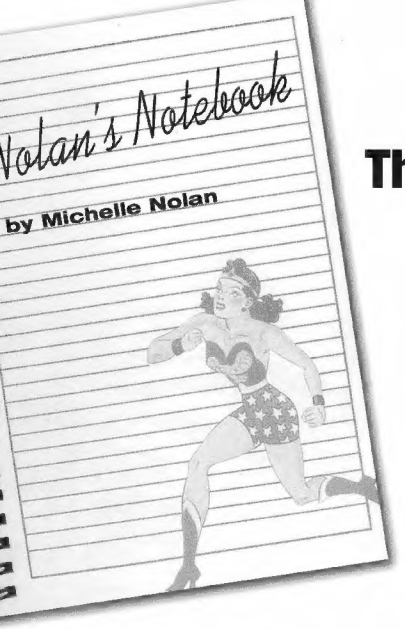
Just wanted to let you know how much my family and I enjoyed the newest *Comic Book Marketplace* (No. 116) and the article on Jews in the Comic Book Industry. What a wonderful inside view on our family. My sons have already passed it around to their friends at college. Dad would be very proud!

Anxiously awaiting the next part! Ghoulishly yours,

Cathy Gaines Mifsud
via e-mail

Thanks a bunch, Cathy. Cathy is Bill's daughter and is now managing the EC rights through William M. Gaines, Agent, Inc, with the able assistance of her sister Wendy. If not for the friendship and generosity of Bill Gaines, I would not be sitting here today editing this magazine, and there would be no EC Library, etc. I guess I would still be a professor, ready to retire about now. I consider myself very lucky to have known Bill and to have him trust his beloved EC Comics to me to publish and keep alive for future generations of comics fans.

RC



Three Summer Discoveries

Think there aren't new discoveries to be made in the world of old funny books? I'm going to have a good time telling three tales of how I combined fun and frustration on the summer convention circuit.

The three stories involve the discovery of a "new" Golden Age romance comic book—the first such find in several years—and how the issue slipped away from me; of a previously unknown *Miss America* magazine briefly published simultaneously with the long-running comic book for girls; and of what may be the only genuine "cat fight" cover among the nearly 6,000 issues published in the history of romance comics.

Even if you collect only Golden Age super-hero comics, read on. You still might get a kick, like I did, about how our knowledge of pop culture history increases incrementally issue-by-issue, just as it has for more than four decades.

Let's talk about the frustration first. At least it was my frustration—for Jim Vadeboncoeur, Jr., it was a chance to find a prize that could have been mine. I am glad, though, that it found a good home in the immense Vadeboncoeur library, for Jim is always unselfishly willing to share his good fortune with any collector who hungers for knowledge.

For many years, Jim and I have operated with essentially different philosophies of combing funny book boxes (and we must have combed untold thousands). He always comes armed with his lengthy "have list" while I always rely primarily on my much-shorter "want list." This system has always worked well for both of us, since Jim constantly tries to find intriguing examples of art, while I tend to focus more on characters and nostalgic storytelling.

This story begins when I figured—wrong!—that I had found the last of what I thought for years was a total of 27 Ace romance comics published in 1956. (I collect 1956 issues of all types and I'm also seeking the entire run of Ace romance, a nifty little line of 279 issues from 1949-56). What I thought was the last one I needed from 1956 was an issue of *Complete Love* (formerly a pulp title). I found it at ComicCon International in San Diego from the "Mama's Collection" located not long ago by Neat Stuff Collectibles—a cool cache of hundreds of original-owner romance comics of the 1950s.

"Ah, hah," I bragged to myself. "That's it—I finally have every one of those doggone scarce 1956 Ace romance comics." So much for four-color hubris!

The next day, I was resting at Jim's booth of treasures from Bud Plant Illustrated Books, the out-of-print book business that he and Karen Lane run in partnership with Bud. I was probably boasting to Karen about how many cool things I had found when along came Jim with a big grin. "Uh, oh," I said to myself. "He knows something I don't!"

"Take a look at these two issues, Michelle," he said, grin getting wider. "Notice anything?"

"Oh, yeah, I've already got…" I responded. Oops! And gulp! And aarrgghh! Even though I had gone through the same Neat Stuff boxes of

Miss America Young Life... #2 (Winter 1949) Magazine format.

Ultra High Grade Marvels = www.pedigreecomics.com

Why consign or sell your books to Pedigree Comics?

- ★ Pedigree Comics deals exclusively in CGC graded comics & magazines, so our customers can buy your books with confidence & without guesswork.
- ★ Pedigree specializes in ultra high grade Marvel Silver, Bronze & Copper age comic books & magazines; many from nationally recognized pedigree collections.
- ★ Pedigree offers the absolute lowest consignment fee in the industry: 8% (most auction houses & dealers charge a minimum of 15% + buyers premium).
- ★ Sell your comics to Pedigree Comics. Owner, Doug Schmell, has paid the highest recorded prices for many of the Marvel keys, individual issues & runs in our inventory (ask anybody – even other dealers!).
- ★ At Pedigree Comics, we maintain an exclusive clientele of high grade Marvel collectors waiting to buy your books & magazines.
- ★ Pedigree Comics has over 30 years of experience of buying, selling, trading and collecting Marvel comics.
- ★ Pedigree Comics has the highest graded inventory of Marvel Comics (check out the CGC Registry set listings for "Captain Tripps").

Pedigree Comics

All Fantastic Four Characters
Copyright Marvel Comics

CGC Comics Guaranty, LLC
Charter Member Dealer

www.pedigreecomics.com
email: DougSchmell@pedigreecomics.com
phone toll free: (877) 6-COMICS

SECRETS OF YOUTHFUL LOVERS
ROMANTIC
Hearts
NOV.
No. 9
YOU KEEP AWAY FROM JIM! HE BROUGHT ME ON THIS OUTING. HE'S MY MAN, YOU UNDERSTAND -- ALL MINE!!
THERE GO THE GIRLS FIGHTING OVER ME. I NEVER SHOULD HAVE GIVEN THEM BOTH THE SAME LINE --
CAN LOVE SURMOUNT ALL BARRIERS? READ:
RIVER GIRL

Romantic Hearts #9 (Nov 1954, second series)

romance comics the day before and bought 23 of them, it turned out I overlooked a 1956 issue of *Love Experiences* that I did not know existed, simply because my want list already said I had #38. I had always thought #38 was dated August on the cover and June in the indicia—a mistake not unheard of during the Golden Age—since that was the issue I had. But I should have known better, especially since the other five ace romance titles all regularly ran through at least September.

Jim's system had trumped mine, since it turned out he did not have *Love Experiences* #38—either one, in fact. In checking the indicia, he discovered the real *Love Experiences* #38, which is correctly numbered and dated in the indicia and listed with the correct June date on the cover (Ace didn't run numbers on the covers by then). The cover-dated August issue, which Jim also bought at the same time and was the issue I already had, is really #39, even though the indicia still lists it was #38.

And—get this—even though the numbering was not changed in the indicia from the June to August issues, the publishing frequency was, with the listing going from bi-monthly to quarterly. Definitely one of the oddest indicia mistakes ever!

Jim has kindly supplied a copy of the cover of the real *Love Experiences* #38, dated June 1956, to go with this column. Does anyone have this humble but apparently obscure issue for sale? I'll pay triple *Guide*—a whopping $15!

Now for the fun—two dirt-cheap discoveries that I did find!

The first discovery came in August at Wizard World in Chicago, a compelling convention in the mold of comic shows the way they used to be—almost all comics, all the time, everything from quarter boxes on up. There's no end of how many boxes you can dig through at this show!

While doing more than my quota of digging, I came up with a classic that would have warmed the cockles of Fredric Wertham's heart—*Romantic Hearts* #9 (Nov 1954)—for a whopping $5. I was stunned when I saw a "cat fight" cover, representing just about everything the Wertham-inspired Comics Code would have abhorred.

I have not seen all of the nearly 6,000 romance comics published from the late 1940s through the early 1980s, but I have eye-traced the covers of well over 95 percent of them and I own more than half of them. I've seen a few "cat fight" covers on crime comics, but never on a genuine romance comic! There were, of course, numerous passive-aggressive conflicts and plenty of tears on the covers of old love funny books, but this was something different.

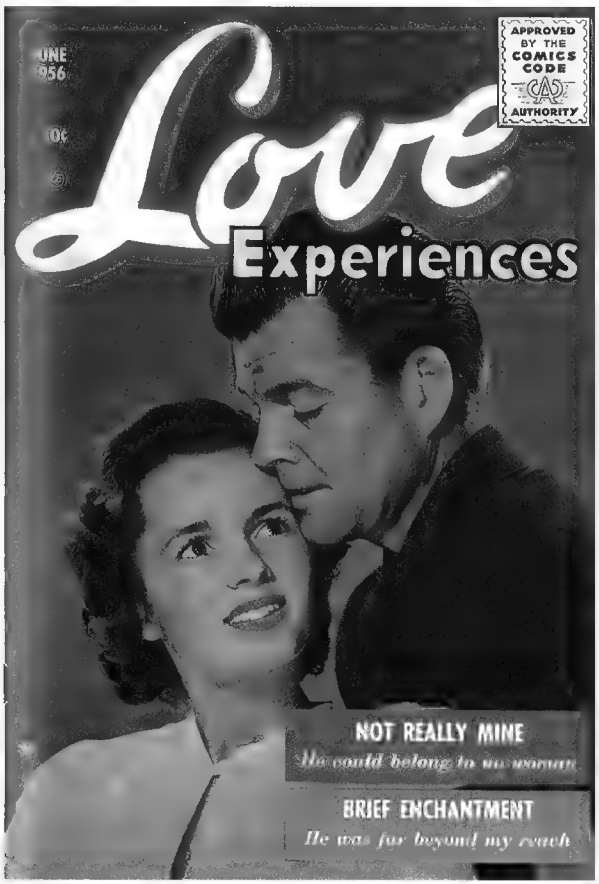
I couldn't quite believe my eyes—this had to be one of the wildest, weirdest covers I had ever seen on any comic book! Not to mention one of the strangest. The cover dialog is also some of the most unintentionally awful I have

ever seen—it would fit right in with John Lustig's wonderfully amusing *Last Kiss* parody series. Incidentally, *Romantic Hearts* #9 (second series) indeed is shown in the Gerber *Photo-Journal*—I just somehow had never noticed it.

The unsigned cover shows one woman (with cleavage bursting in a drawing that can only charitably be called a bit anatomically exaggerated) knocking another woman against the rail of an excursion boat while shouting, "You keep away from Jim! He brought me on this outing (!). He's my man, you understand—all mine!" Meanwhile, Jim is casually standing in the background thinking, "There go the girls fighting over me. I never should have given them both the same line—"

Talk about a classic male chauvinist pig!

This unorthodox cover was part of the second series of the *Romantic Hearts* title, produced by Master Comics, the same folks who produced some of the more bizarre Master/Merit horror comics of the era. The cover, published only a few months before the Comics Code Authority symbol began to appear, almost seems like a parody of everything the Code would not permit.


APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
Love Experiences
NOT REALLY MINE
He could belong to another woman
BRIEF ENCHANTMENT
He was far beyond my reach

Love Experiences (Jun 1956) #38.

NATIONWIDE COMICS
WE BUY AND SELL COMICS
NATIONWIDE

East of the MISSISSIPPI
DAVE REYNOLDS
PO BOX 8198
RADNOR, PA
19087-8198
PH.610-275-8817
E-mail: davesamerican@earthlink.net

West of the MISSISSIPPI
TERRY O'NEILL
PO BOX 2065
ORANGE, CA.
92859-2232
PH.714-288-8993
FAX 714-288-8992
E-MAIL info@terryscomics.com

VISA

WHY WOULD YOU SELL TO US?
YOU GET AN OWNER WHO CAN MAKE IMMEDIATE DECISIONS, NOT AN EMPLOYEE.
PERSONAL, FRIENDLY, ONE ON ONE SERVICE.
NO HIGH PRESSURE SALES TECHNIQUES. JUST AN HONEST COMPETITIVE BID.
EVERYBODY SAYS THEY PAY THE MOST, WELL SO DO WE. CONTACT US AND FIND OUT.
ONE DAY DRIVE TO ANYWHERE IN THE SOUTHWEST AND NORTHEAST.
NO CHARGE FOR APPRAISALS.
WANT LISTS GLADLY ACCEPTED AND USED.
TRADES ARE ALWAYS WELCOME.
ALL COMICS FROM MINT TO INCOMPLETE ARE BOUGHT AND APPRECIATED.
FAIR ACCURATE GRADING
30 DAY RETURN POLICY.
OVERSTREET ADVISOR.
CBG CUSTOMER SERVICE AWARDS
CGC AUTHORIZED DEALER.

Conventional Magazines

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.TERRYSCOMICS.COM
SELLERS HOTLINE: 1-800-938-0325

Oddly, the cover-featured story, "River Girl," did not come close to featuring any cat fights. However, the good guy of the piece does wind up knocking the bad guy over a boat rail—seconds after the thug had slapped the heroine.

By the by, one of the four stories in this issue, subtly entitled "I Wanted a Caveman," is one of the worst anyone could imagine. Here's all you need to know: As the splash shows one guy laying into another with a left hook, the woman in front blurts out, "I finally got Bob to fight for me! He really loves me!" Enough said.

Ironically, Master Comics (the company, not the Fawcett title) was located at 480 Lexington Ave. in New York—then the hallowed address of National (DC) Comics, which published the mildest and least controversial of all pre-Code romance comics.

And in one of those weird examples of synchronicity, a collector at the one-day Seattle comics show in September called me over with a question. "Hey, Michelle," said T.J. Pitts, "have you ever seen a cat fight cover on a romance comic?"

To which I replied, "Have I got a story for you…"

Now I can only imagine some collector coming up to me at a convention next summer, moaning, "Dagnabbit and doggone it,

In business since 1974
Redbeard's Book Den
redbeardsbookden.com
• Our incredible selection is updated daily
• Searchable database with shopping cart
• Secure credit card service and PayPal
• Managed by Ron Pussell, senior Price Guide consultant since 1980
• Always buying!
(775) 831-4848

Michelle, until you wrote about it, I always hoped to pick up that cat fight comic book! Now everyone's gonna want $100 for it..." If you can find it!

My last discovery of the summer came at an antique mall in Abilene, Kansas, as I was slowly returning from Chicago, being constantly sidetracked by billboards about antique malls. And there it was in a rack of old magazines—an absolutely stunning Elizabeth Taylor cover on a publication called *Miss America Young Life*... (I have no idea what those dots were doing in the logo.)

Love Experiences (Aug 1956) The real #39 (indicia still says #38).

Best of all—it was four bucks!

"Miss America?" I asked myself. "What's this? And what connection does this have to the *Miss America* comic book?"

Nice that you should ask. It turned out to be a typical teen-age magazine for girls, very much in the *Seventeen* mode, published by no less than Martin Goodman, the head of Timely Comics (later Atlas and Marvel). The *Miss America* magazine I found was Vol. 1, #2 (Winter 1949), listed as a quarterly—and there must have been a first issue, since there is a letters column referring to it.

In fact, one reader even told the editor, Joellen Murdock, on the letters page that she preferred *Miss America* when it still carried Patsy Walker. To which the editor replied, "There are two *Miss America*'s (sic) now!" That, of course, was true. Interestingly, though, the *Miss America* comic book had not had any rotogravure pages since the July 1947 issue, Vol. 6 #3 (thanks for this tip to Jim Vadeboncoeur, the ultimate Atlas collector).

One can only speculate that Goodman, or his business manager, figured there was still a lot of money to be made with rotogravure-style teen magazine advertising, even though it had been well over a year since he had last published such ads in the old hybrid style *Miss America* comic book. This magazine left me wondering, though, if there were any issues beyond #2. I had never seen or heard of this *Miss America Young Life* magazine. The size of the magazine was identical to the men's "sweat" magazines Goodman published in the 1950s.

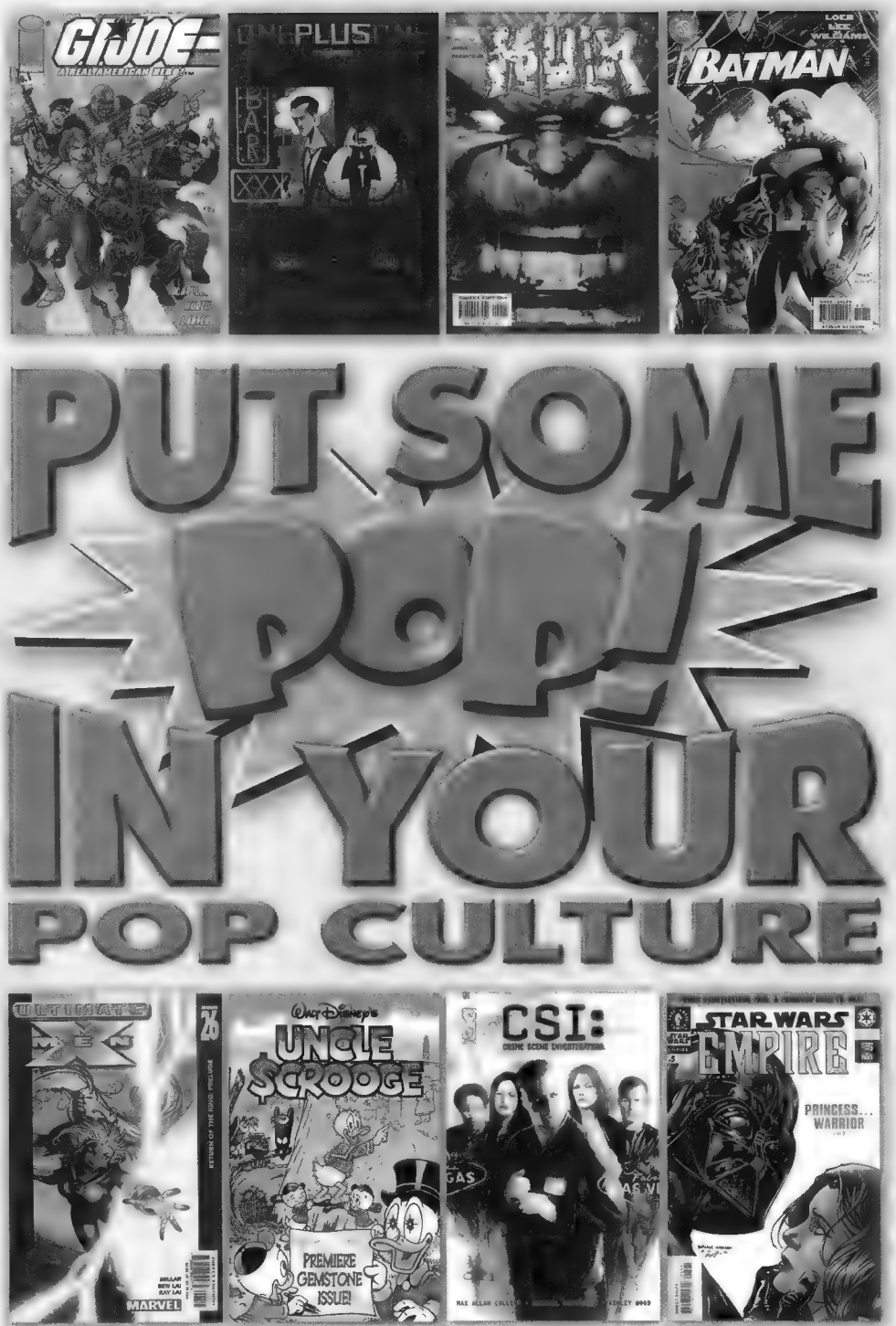
Other than his company's comic books, I have never seen any other teen-oriented publications from the Goodman stable. I'd be interested if readers have ever seen any other copies of the magazine *Miss America Young Life*.

Miss Taylor is absolutely stunning on the cover of the issue I found, wearing a classic black velvet dress in a photo posed with a rose while she was 17 going on about 30, at least in sophistication. She earlier appeared on a *Miss America* comic book cover (Vol. 4 #3, Jul 1946) when she was only 14 in the wake of the sensation she created in *National Velvet* (1944).

Inside, there is a long article by Reba and Bonnie Churchill in which Taylor gives advice to girls about clothes, charm and more. And on the letters page is a cordial note from Taylor to Martin Goodman, thanking him for allowing her to be featured in the magazine.

There's also a lead article in the magazine entitled "Sex and Your Value," which is amazingly frank for the period. All in all, a fascinating discovery from the publisher of Timely Comics. This 76-page issue (including covers) is cover-priced 15 cents and copyrighted 1949, so I assume that its true date is Winter 1949-50.

What summer tales do you have to carry us through the winter?



All characters ©2003 respective Copyright holders. All rights reserved.

Geppi's Comic World

A BALTIMORE TRADITION SINCE 1974!
1116 N. Rolling Road • Baltimore, MD 21228
(410)788-0900 • gdoug@diamondcomics.com

by Pat Calhoun

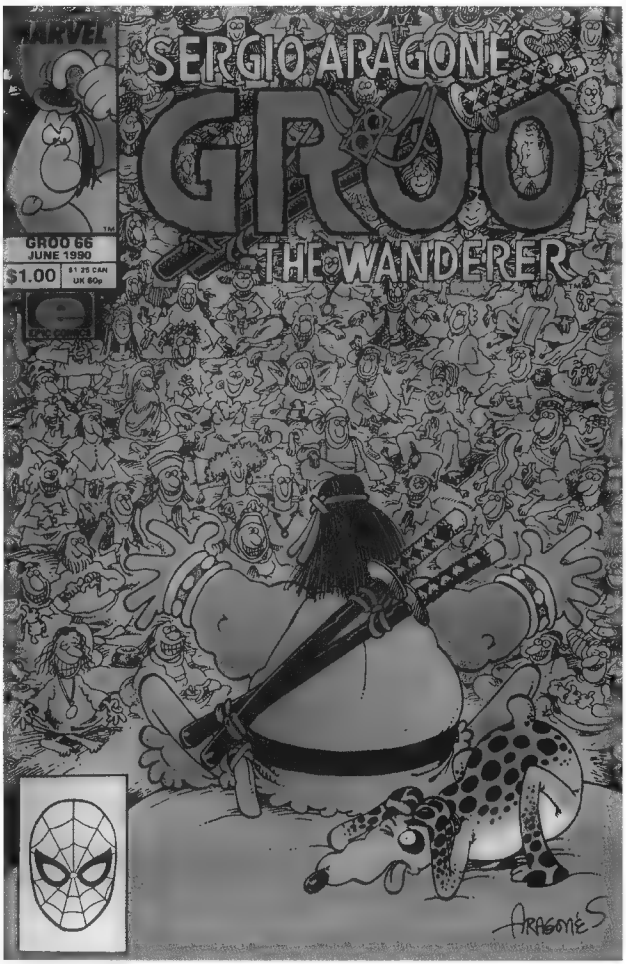
Fighting Hate with Humor: "Groo"

The Modern Age of comics was marked by a blurring of some of the traditional moralities that had prevailed through the Gold and Silver Ages where clear if simplistic versions of right and wrong informed everything from *Archie* to *Batman*, to *Crime Does Not Pay*, *Haunt of Fear*, and on through *Zorro*. Marvel characters like Wolverine and the Punisher weren't heroes from the old school, and DC darkened Batman to match the new mood. To say that there were many cultural, political and economic factors guiding these changes would be understatement. But while there was a general moral murkiness, one series in particular stands out for having sharpened its focus to tackle complex and compelling themes in delightful graphic novelettes as hilarious as they were and are relevant: *Groo the Wanderer*.

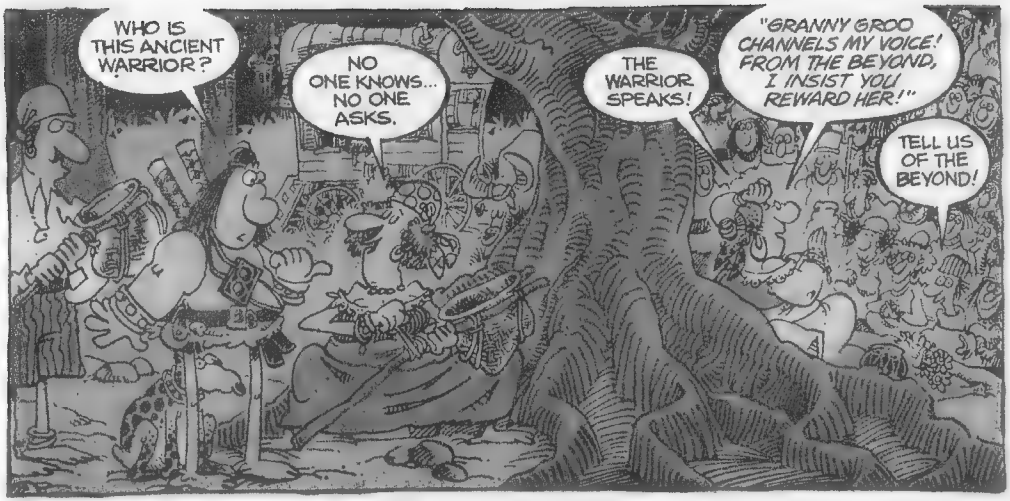
Sometimes a long-running strip will keep getting better as the world it creates is fleshed out (John Stanley's *Little Lulu* is the classic example), and happily *Groo* falls into this special category. The team of Sergio Aragones and Mark Evanier took this fully-developed world and used their protagonist—the supremely stupid swordsman who's likely to inadvertently ravage his friends almost as much as his foes—as a catalyst to study the society of that bygone era, and, by extension, our own.

This thematic focus is superbly demonstrated in *Groo* #66 (Jun 1990) in the blissfully ridiculous tale of "The Gurus." When a couple of con men come across a crowd listening to a guru they are amazed and inspired by the copious donations dropped into the collection baskets carried by the pundit's retainers. And since they have an acquaintance who is wont to pontificate to anyone who'll listen (the Sage, from previous issues), a new get-rich-quick scheme develops. They strike a deal with the Sage and begin their own series of lectures and basket-passing.

Soon others—even more scurrilous—are getting into the racket, until it degenerates to the point where Groo's old nemesis Taranto gains a following by telling people how worthless they are. And it is Groo who frees the people from these hypnotic



Groo #66 (Jun 1990). Groo might not be smart or versed in public speaking, but he offers the one thing the other gurus seem to lack: honesty! Still, faithful canine comrade Rufferto seems to be having a rough time "digesting" it all.


WHO IS THIS ANCIENT WARRIOR?
NO ONE KNOWS... NO ONE ASKS.
THE WARRIOR SPEAKS!
"GRANNY GROO CHANNELS MY VOICE! FROM THE BEYOND, I INSIST YOU REWARD HER!"
TELL US OF THE BEYOND!

Before long...
YOU ARE ALL DONKEY DROPPINGS! YOUR LIVES ARE WRETCHED AND MY TRAINING WILL SHOW YOU HOW WRETCHED THEY ARE!
THIS TRAINING WILL TAKE MANY HOURS AND YOU MAY NOT LEAVE DURING IT!

The guru business goes from bad to worse as Granny Groo starts a lucrative channeling scam, and Taranto makes good money insulting his audience—as shown in glorious panels from pages 16 and 18 of issue #66.

harangues by enjoining them "Do not listen to me! Do not listen to anyone!" This snaps the spell and the story ends with a formidable mob off in search of the "false gurus" to give *them* a little advice!

This fabulous fable is crack-up funny throughout and *mucho* fun to look at! In short, folks, this is a classic awaiting recognition. Of all the "self-help" books you could buy—this is the one to choose! The panoramic perspective that shows the effects of actions on a societal level goes far beyond the misadventures of a "Conan pastiche" and beyond the aspirations of most comic book narratives.

In *Groo* #70 (Oct 1990) Aragones and Evanier employ a character, Weaver, writer of tales, who bears resemblance to M.E. and, after committing himself (first chapter's already sent to the publisher) to chronicling Groo's "heroic" exploits, realizes he's made a major mistake in "The Greatest Hero." As Weaver says to his Scribe (modeled on letterer Stan Sakai?) "I have staked my career on the heroism of this buffoon. There is but one way I may maintain my reputation for truth and accuracy—I shall have to lie!" Well it seems to work as Weaver bluffs his way through chapter after chapter, and the book is a success. So much so that the publisher demands Weaver bring Groo to a book party. And Weaver hires a phony Groo, who at the party and for the main event challenges a member of the crowd to a swordfight. He picks a pathetic-looking newcomer but learns to his grief that he has chosen someone who—whatever his flaws (and they are many)—is a master dueler, the real Groo.

The reputation of Groo precedes his arrival in every village and is always cause for much excitement...
IS THAT GROO?
I CANNOT BELIEVE OUR LUCK!
IS THAT GROO?
I CANNOT BELIEVE OUR LUCK!
Wherever he goes, one hears the voices of the townspeople, raised in excited anticipation of what his stay will mean to them...
IT IS GROO!
MAKE WAY!
IT IS GROO!
MAKE WAY!

It's not that Weaver's words aren't true; it's all the deceiving they do. These superb "split-screen" panels from page 20 show the same words serving two opposing contexts. The story's "moral" (they all end with one—see facing page) on page 30 sums it up again (**Groo** #70).

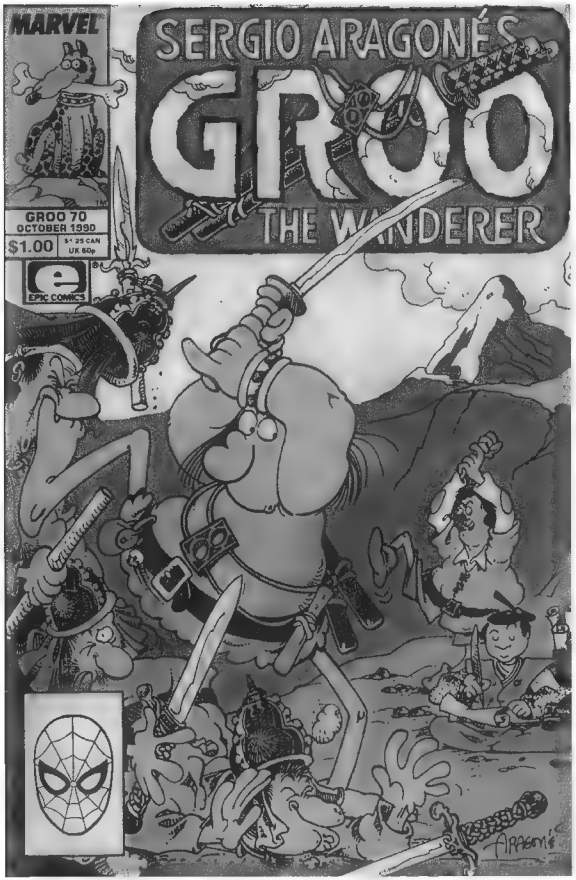
And as the false hero shows his true and craven colors, so too, Weaver receives the proper reward for his perjury as the crowd roars "no sale" to his bogus book.

That such an incisive portrait of the writer's responsibility comes packaged in such a monumentally amusing novelette is our great good fortune. And Aragones has fun with Scribe, who is silent, but manifests a charming range of facial responses.

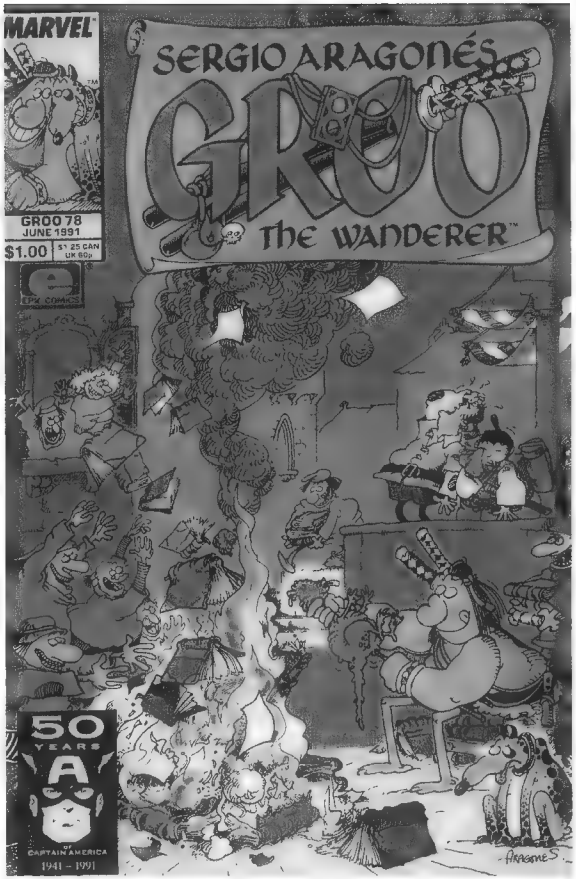
Weaver and Scribe are back in *Groo* #78 (Jun 1991) in a story that lambastes the politics of censorship, "The Book Burners." Or as Evanier puts it in the introductory verse that accompanies the two-page splash panel:

A world without the censors would,
with jeopardy be fraught,
They save us from the danger of an independent thought.

Weaver's book about Groo is selling briskly when the King's Court Censor shows up in the town square just in time to see Groo brawling after having looked at a copy of it. And while the King is away at war the Censor convinces the



Groo #70 (Oct 1990). Weaver enthusiastically translates the action which Scribe dutifully commits to paper, but "In the clutch of combat, as spinners spin, Truth often takes it on the chin."

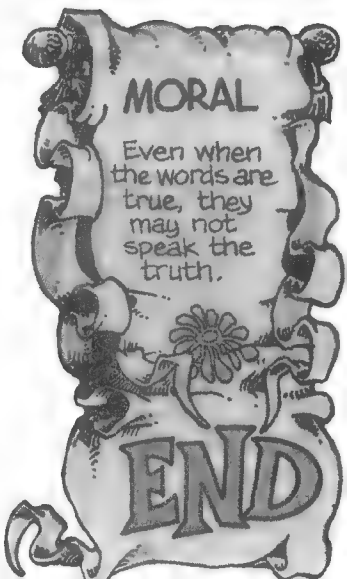


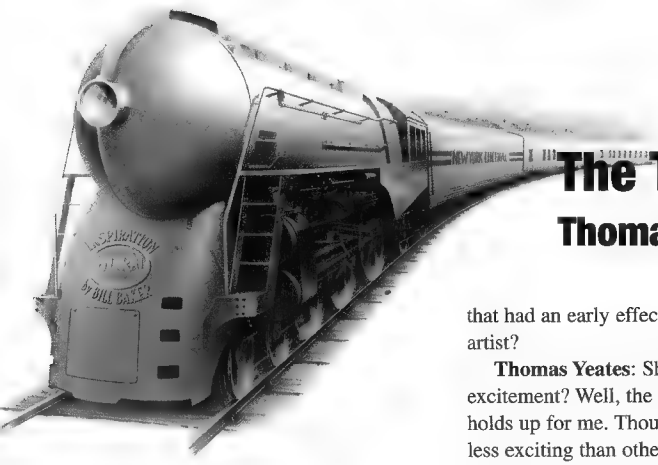
Groo #78 (Jun 1991). Comic book readers and collectors should be especially aware of the perils of censorship—the force that devastated "our" field in the 1950s. Thanks to Sergio and Mark for reminding us to keep our noses alert for "the scent of freedom ablaze."

Prime Minister to ban the book for inciting violence. The P.M. agrees, planning his own power grab, but the King returns early and is disgusted, demanding the two prove their case or lose their heads. And the Censor makes the mistake of framing his case around Groo—who in the thick of the court trial admits that he cannot read. Oh, if only the control freaks of the "real world" would get such a comeuppance! The Prime Minister's line while pondering the Censor's idea, "Banning the book as immoral will make ME seem to be so moral..." sums up the thought process of too many so-called "leaders."

This analysis of the dangers of government is a sophisticated view of society, one that "blows the whistle" more loudly than most all the comics series from the Gold and Silver Ages (some of Carl Barks' duck novels have political subtext), let alone the moral murkiness of the Modern Age.

Some have said that the Modern Age of comics should be called the Iron Age, the last dark leg of the alchemical cycle—preceded by gold, silver and bronze. If so, you'd have to say that *Groo* is highly tempered steel. While *Groo* "masquerades" as a comic about a boobish barbarian obsessed with cheese dip, a closer look reveals that master blacksmiths Aragones and Evanier have forged a most powerful tool, one that lets us laugh while showing us the stumbling blocks on our quest for civilization. Good humor and good advice on how to get along with each other—that's fighting hate.





The Thrill of Discovery

Thomas Yeates on his diverse influences

interview by Bill Baker

Whether you know the work of Thomas Yeates through his recent association with Dark Horse's excellent Conan *monthly, his past work on such popular icons as Sgt. Rock, Swamp Thing and Zorro, or his work of decades past, such as* Luger*—that bit of mid-eighties comic book pulp released by Eclipse which was scripted by Bruce Jones with Yeates doing finishes over Bo Hampton's pencils—it's likely that you noticed that Yeates is an illustrator possessed of rare talents. His figures possess a suppleness coupled with a palpable weight, an effect that's only reinforced by their placement within the confines of a story world that might be strange, true, yet it's a fictional world which seems to have a real gravity and mass of its own. Moreover, as the list of titles above suggests, covering as they do several very different genres, Yeates is also able to draw just about anything, from a previously unimagined monster to the simple flow of water over stones, and make it both believable and striking. All of which makes even more sense when you learn the identities of some of those good folks who have contributed to Yeates' vision, directly and otherwise, over the years.*

Comic Book Marketplace: Who were some of the different people—be they artists who created some of your favorite visuals, writers of those books that still send a shiver of excitement through you, a teacher who might have opened your eyes to some new way to see the page, or your own possibilities—that had an early effect upon you as an artist?

Thomas Yeates: Shiver of excitement? Well, the "good stuff" still holds up for me. Though today some are less exciting than others. There's a long list of old illustrators, old masters, comics and kids book illustrators old and not so old. With the release last year of *Wallace Wood: Against the Grain* by Bhob Stewart I got interested in Wood all over again. Particularly his fantasy work for Marvel and Warren, and the black and white *Mad Magazine* work from the late fifties and early sixties. That material has a quality of "magic" to it that I can't quite figure out. Mark Schultz says you can really feel that Wood absolutely *loved* doing that fantasy stuff, and the sheer joy shines through in it. I also think that writing for himself and his writing formula were big advantages in that work. With *Mad*, he was at the top of his form, many "rules" were out the window, the pay was good, and he was working with sympathetic pros. Of course others may look at this work and not "get it" at all, but I still find that stuff very hard to put down once I've picked it up.

Another guy whose work people say they see in my art is J. Allen St. John. He illustrated many old books and magazines in the first half of the last century, and was particularly associated with Edgar Rice Burroughs. His work doesn't always give me a shiver of excitement, but his best stuff does always have a very unique sense of taste, vision, body language, energy or point of view. Whatever it is, it's intriguing. He can take the old worn out clichés like the hero, girl and monster/villain composition and make it very satisfying without using today's tired predictable lay outs. A big part of this is because he's not working today. Maybe his layouts were less interesting in his day, I don't know, but I doubt it.

Again there are many, many artists who inspire me. I love pulp illustrations and old movie poster art. Old movies, particularly black and white adventure and noire films have a look I often try to channel. Cedric Gibbons, the art director at MGM, had an absolutely incredible eye for lush beautiful visuals. Check out

A brand new sequence by Yeates for Michael Chabon's **The Escapist** coming soon from Dark Horse. Wood and Williamson probably both influenced this art.

A Midsummer Night's Dream with Mickey Rooney—what a knock out—or *Romeo and Juliet* with Leslie Howard.

The lessons of good teachers still echo in my work. I had two very different though very good art teachers in high school, a great anatomy teacher in college and some great teachers at the Kubert school, particularly Joe Kubert, Rick Estrada, Dick Giordano, and Lee Elias.

Writers? [Edgar Rice] Burroughs, [Sir Arthur] Conan Doyle, [Robert E.] Howard, [H.P.] Lovecraft, Jack London, Mark Twain. All carry a certain fascination for me. Music also fuels my art quite a bit—[Jimi] Hendrix, Quicksilver [Messenger Service], Muddy Waters, Spirit, Joni Mitchell, Steve Earle, etc., [along with some] newer stuff, friends' recordings of themselves. Sometimes those whose work I admire led troubled or even tormented lives. Many of my heroes are fallen heroes. Not sure why, but often they just seem to have more "umph."

CBM: What about their work particularly interested you, and how might it have affected your work over the years?

Yeates: The one artist who affected me most is probably Al Williamson. His work has a power, grace and professional quality that I really wanted when I started out. So I tried to figure out what made it look so good. I remember Rick Veitch saying, "Look at how he does those folds on a sleeve, a thin line, a thick line, and a scribbly line." But it is also the use of black, negative space and design that makes his work stand out, and I learned a lot from him. His buddy Roy Krenkel is also a big influence on me, particularly in my sketches. [Alex] Toth is in there pretty deep. With Wood, he just has this incredibly appealing graphic look. Try as I might, I just can't quite grasp how he can pack so much into a panel and still make it read so clearly. But I do sometimes use some of his formulas for various elements in drawing. Old friends like Tim Truman and John Totleben have also influenced me.

With the old illustrators I try and

Another big influence on Yeates is Alberto Gioletti's incredible work on **Turok Son of Stone** for Gold Key. This is a private commission of Turok by Yeates.

J. Allen St. John art for Edgar Rice Burroughs' **Thuvia Maid of Mars** from 1920.

capture that escapism from today's world that they have. Again, partly because they didn't create that stuff in today's world. I like to go someplace in good art. With the writers, I like to try and include the truths in the best of that stuff, like London and Twain, the spirit of adventure of Burroughs and the delicious madness of Howard and Lovecraft.

CBM: How about later influences, be they from a few years ago or someone you've recently discovered…and, again, what about their work caught your attention, or imagination?

Yeates: Roy Crane's *Buz Sawyer* I got into more recently, but it's also "old stuff." There are lots of top notch graphics talents today. Mike Mignola is one. I have a hard time remembering the names, but there's Bryan Hitch, Stuart Immonen, John Paul Leon, Alex Ross is pretty amazing. I wish I could paint like Dan Brereton. Cary Nord is influencing me a bit right now.

CBM: How do you introduce, incorporate and ultimately "make your own" those influences or techniques from others? Is it a conscious process, or more of a "Zen thing" where you learn something to the point where you literally forget you're doing it, almost like the process of learning and mastering riding a bike, or working with any kind of tool, artistic, powered, or otherwise?

Yeates: It's usually a "Zen thing." I think art analysis is interesting, but it's not my forte.

CBM: What advice would you have for a young artist who had all their basic chops down, but was still searching for their own style, or perhaps stuck in the rut of endlessly aping or even imitating another artist?

Yeates: Get better. Make your stuff sing to the point where they're going to really want you. To get there always strive to break out of your own self imposed limitations. And always look at your own work very critically, like an editor will who already has very talented people to work with.

CBM: What do you get from making art in general, and from creating comics, in particular?

Yeates: I get a feeling of satisfaction of a job well done. That's really what propels me forward, wanting to do a good job and to enjoy doing it, to have fun in the process.

CBM: What do you hope your audience gets from your work? Is it just about pure entertainment, or might you occasionally aspire to doing a little more with it?

Yeates: I hope to take them on a little trip. Sometimes there's a message too. It's certainly nice if there's some substance to a story, as it greatly enhances the ride.

CBM: Anything you'd like to add?

Yeates: Anybody who's interested in looking at my work can go to

[continued on page 79]

CAN YOU WALK?
I MUST, BUT I WILL. BE WALKING SLOWLY AND THAT COULD BRING US TO THE CAVE OPENING AFTER DAWN -- AFTER THE FLYING MONKERS RETURN!
LATER, AS DAWN APPROACHES
AT LAST, THE CAVE OPENING AND
SHHH! I STEN
OUTSIDE, THE SOUND OF FLAPPING WINGS ECHOES OVER THE VALLEY FLOOR MINGLING WITH THE RASPING CALL OF THE RETURNING HUNTING FLOCK.
DID YOU HEAR..
..YES! WE HAVE REACHED HERE TOO LATE! THEY ARE COMING BACK!
WE CANNOT GET OUT PAST THEM NOW!
NO, WE ARE TRAPPED!
END PART I

Turok Son of Stone #52 art by Alberto Gioletti from 1966. Nobody could do rocks and cliffs like Gioletti, Williamson always kept Turok on hand for inspiration.

Major Malcolm Wheeler Nicholson
Major Disaster

by Will Murray

If there's a guy who missed the boat in comics, it's Major Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson. Dashing Army officer turned writer, he stumbled into the brand-new field of comic books in 1934, launching the company that eventually launched Superman and a thousand super-clones.

The facts of Wheeler-Nicholson's brief misadventurous pre-comics career are pretty well known. The Tennessee-born U. S. Cavalry officer was considered a troublesome individual who chafed under Army discipline. In 1922, he made the mistake of publishing a letter accusing elements of the US army of "Prussianism" and sending said letter to President Warren G. Harding. This got him 80 days under house arrest at Camp Dix, during which he was shot in the head during a strange episode when he stuck his head into an unlocked window of his friend and counsel, a Major Colby. He lay unconscious for nearly an hour before help was summoned, almost bleeding to death.

Cashiered out of the Army, Nicholson took up writing pulp adventure stories around 1924, becoming very successful at it. He specialized in high adventure and historical yarns set in far climes.

Less well known, never mind documented, was Nicholson's brief foray into the newspaper syndicate field in the mid-'20s.

Best as can be determined, the Wheeler-Nicholson Inc. syndicate opened shop in the summer or fall of 1925 at 15-17 West 44th Street, New York City. It offered everything from syndicated fiction (probably his own) to household hint columns. Chief among its offerings was the Great Mystery and Adventure Series, which adapted classic novels in comic strip format, with dialogue captions instead of balloons. "Treasure Island" was the first sequence, followed by "The Three Musketeers" and "Ivanhoe." Ruth J. Williams was the series author, although playwright N. Brewster Morse signed "Treasure Island." An artist who signed himself "Meetrich" drew "Treasure Island" and started "The Three Musketeers," which was written by Wheeler-Nicholson himself. Nicholas Afonsky took over the art on "The Three Musketeers." (Afonsky later adapted "Treasure Island" and "Ivanhoe" for Ed Wheelan's "Minute Movies.") These *Classics Illustrated* precursors were the first non-funny comic strips ever published anywhere. Undated, they ran in three-month blocks in unaffiliated newspapers from October 1925 through July of '26.

And there were other offerings. A "Delevante" executed an original idea, "The Adventures of Vivian Vanity." Others included Oscar Hitt's "Ambitious Ambrose," Bill Bly's "Duckville Doings," Jim Navoni's "Charlie the Chimp," "Mike O'Kay" by "Roberts," and Afonsky's "Famous Short Stories," which may only have been another name for The Great Mystery and Adventure series. None may have ever appeared in print.

Early in 1926, Wheeler-Nicholson Inc. seemed poised for a major expansion. Around April, the syndicate moved to larger quarters at 373 Fourth Avenue in New York City. Two months later, Wheeler-Nicholson announced it had secured new capital and was set to launch an unusual new publication, *The Syndicator*, a newspaper supplement containing an assortment of the syndicate's comics and non-comics features. It was a bold concept. But it failed to materialize.

The November *Author & Journalist* reported that "Wheeler-Nicholson, Inc....apparently has gone out of business.... Various contributors have reported that they have been unable to secure reports upon submitted material, and mail addressed to the syndicate is being returned by the post office. As late as October 12th, Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson, president, wrote to the *Author & Journalist* that all difficulties with contributors were being straightened out, but a later communication from *Editor and Publisher*, the newspaper trade journal,

states that the syndicate had been dissolved and that Major Wheeler-Nicholson has apparently left New York, leaving no address." In short, the Major had decamped, leaving contributors holding an empty bag. History was destined to repeat itself.

Flash forward to the Great Depression. Major Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson publishes the first all-new comic book, *New Fun Comics*, late in 1934 under the National Allied Publishing banner. The first issue runs an adaptation of "Ivanhoe" in the art-and-caption style of his old syndicated strips but drawn by Charles Flanders. Further adaptations of "Treasure Island" and "The Three Musketeers" also appear. It's possible that these were the remnants of a new syndication project that never got off the ground. In addition to comics, *New Fun* #1 featured fiction and columns covering movie, radio and science news, as well as various miscellany, making it sound suspiciously like a revival of *The Syndicator* aimed at juvenile readers. Every strip was presented in Sunday page style—one installment per issue.

It's rumored that this new venture was backed by a Brooklyn newspaper. But it was troubled from the start. First editor Lloyd Jacquet and cartoonist editor Sheldon Stark don't linger long. Whitney Ellsworth and Vince Sullivan soon replaced them as associate editors. Three months passed between *New Fun* #6 and *More Fun* #7, during which it shrank from tabloid size to the more familiar modern comic book format, with the addition of limited color. Features began to run multiple pages, inaugurating the first true comic book format for strips.

By most accounts, it was a pretty shady operation. While still a teenager, artist Sheldon Mayer jumped aboard early on.

"My first work in comic books was for Wheeler-Nicholson," he admitted. "I wandered into their office to show them my portfolio and they hired me on the spot. They were thrilled with my work and I didn't know that the enormous amount of money they promised me was just big talk. They gave me a very involved contract. Of course, I was too young to sign a contract but I didn't know it and it didn't seem to bother them. In reality, all the contract said was, 'If at the end of six months you're not making $25.00 a week, you can quit. If at the end of a year you're not making $50.00 a week, you can quit. If at the end of two years you're not making $100.00 a week, you can quit,' all the way up to $500 a week."

Bill Barnes—beside his "Bumblebee."

New Comics was launched in 1935 with partners John Mahon and a pulp writer named Bill Cook. This prompted the retitling of *New Fun. New Comics* was renamed *New Adventure Comics*. After a falling out, the three former partners divided the inventory strips between them. When Cook and Mahon's *The Comics Magazine* came out in 1936, it featured several *New Fun* strips retitled. Since some were serials, collectors discovered sequential gaps in things like Siegel and Shuster's "Dr. Occult" and "Federal Men," with the missing installments turning up in the rival book under variant titles like "Dr. Mystic" and "Federal Agent"!

During this difficult period, National Allied Publishing became the National Allied Newspaper Syndicate Company, and later the Nicholson Publishing Company. He also made a fateful switch in distributors. Leaving S-M News for the Independent News Company, owned by printer Harry Donenfeld, who also printed the Major's four-color covers, he bought time for his operation.

The polished major had the habit of changing offices and leaving his contributors holding the bag for payment. In his pre-Batman days, Bob Kane was stiffed for work printed but not paid for, realizing the truth only when he showed up to collect the 300 bucks owed him and discovering the office had been vacated. Many future famous artists were stiffed by Nicholson.

"One day I was waiting for a light to cross Fifth Avenue," remembered Sheldon Mayer. "Standing beside me was a tall slender kid about my age, carrying a portfolio like mine. I looked at his portfolio. He looked at mine. I asked, 'You a cartoonist?' He replied, 'Yeah, you?' 'Yeah.' 'Who for?" 'Major Nicholson!' 'Me, too.' 'Didja get paid

yet?' 'Not a dime!' 'Me, neither!'"

The other artist was future *Pogo* creator Walt Kelly.

The Major was said by many he bilked to be a charmer. "He always bowed when he shook hands with you," recalled Craig Flessel. Others described him affecting a cane, spats and a beaver hat, smoking cigarettes through an elegant holder while presiding over a cramped office packed with hungry talent while fending off insistent printers, bankers, process servers, and other creditors.

"He had all these fellows in this little office," recounted artist Lyman Anderson, whose Western strip "Jack Woods," was printed as the cover to *New Fun* #1, "the whole place full of writers and artists, and he was having them sign their life away."

Mint unsold returns of early *New* and *More Fun*s were said to choke the premises which, had they been saved, would be worth a small fortune today.

How much The Major personally contributed creatively to his own books may never be unearthed. He signed pulpy serial strips like "The Blood Pearls," "Monastery of the Blue God" and "Hooves of the Tartar Horde," all drawn by "Pad," an old newspaper hand named Munson Paddock. Nicholson may also have scripted "Jack Woods," "Captain Quick," "Barry O'Neil" and "Bruce Nelson," a detective character who ran through early *Detective Comics* serials with melodramatic titles like "The Claws of the Red Dragon" and "The Blood of the Lotus." Tom Hickey drew "Bruce Nelson." The Major recruited him out of a WPA program, where he had been teaching art.

Financial difficulties eventually forced Nicholson to sell a part interest in what became DC Comics to his printer and distributor, Harry Donenfeld, in order to launch *Detective Comics*. Even after skipping out on creator payments, the Major lacked sufficient funds to pay his cover printer. By 1938, he was shuffled out of the partnership under murky circumstances, just as a new title, *Action Funnies*, was being prepared.

"Nicholson was a bit ahead of his time," explained Whitney Ellsworth, "And unfortunately the books did not prosper. The national distributor, Independent News Company, had made financial advances, and was forced to take over the books to protect its investment (...if the magazines broke even or even lost a *little* money, there was at least a nominal profit in distribution, so it was feasible to continue publication). The publishing arm of Independent News Company became, of course, Detective Comics, Inc."

Recalled Vin Sullivan, "They kept the Detective Comics name, and simply moved six or eight blocks north on

Lexington Avenue to their own offices."

Ironically, Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson had his hands on the jackpot of all jackpots, but let it slip through his fingers.

In a letter dated October 4, 1935, he told Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, who had just sold their first professional strips, "Dr. Occult" and "Henri Duval of France," to *New Fun*:

"The Superman strip is being held for an order now pending from a national syndicate. It is my own idea, based on a lot of experience selling in the syndicate game, that you would be much better off doing Superman in full color for one of our publications. I consider our magazines primarily catalogues of features and the selling resistance is considerably less for color stuff than it is on daily black and white. We also have pending an order for a sixteen-page tabloid in four colors in which we could include Superman around the first of the year, if we have it in color and running. Use your own judgment on this. I think myself that Superman stands a very good chance."

Siegel and Shuster decided to save Superman for a less shaky deal. Otherwise, he might have appeared in 1935 or '36, transforming comics two years earlier than history now records.

Wheeler-Nicholson slunk back to pulp writing and passed away in obscurity in 1968, his opinion of what he had wrought apparently unrecorded.

There is a persistent story—based on legal papers on file in the DC archives—that Nicholson retained a silent interest in *More Fun Comics* for ten years after his severance from the company he founded. When his contract expired at the end of 1947, so did *More Fun Comics*. DC simply cancelled it.

What is also not well known is that Wheeler-Nicholson's pulp career was on something of a downswing when he turned publisher. He was used to contributing to the best-selling, more prestigious pulps like *Argosy* and *Adventure* (from whence no doubt he gleaned the title inspiration for *Adventure Comics*) when in 1933 he was roped into writing the adventures of a new character, Bill Barnes, star of Street & Smith's *Bill Barnes* magazine. Barnes was a U.S. Mail pilot turned adventurer who, with a collection of fellow barnstormers, operated as a combination free-lance mercenary and transport pilot for hire. They flew a squad of fast fighters of Bill's own invention, called Snorters.

Now guys of the Major's caliber didn't stoop to writing house name stuff like Bill Barnes even if he did in all likelihood co-create it. That was for the younger generation of Depression-era pulpsters like Lester Dent, Walter B. Gibson and Norvell W. Page, who did Doc Savage, The Shadow and the Spider

respectively. But guys like Wheeler-Nicholson were finding the Depression tough sledding. Pulp chains were folding. Rates were drying up. Younger, hungrier writers were having the lunch of writers like the Major.

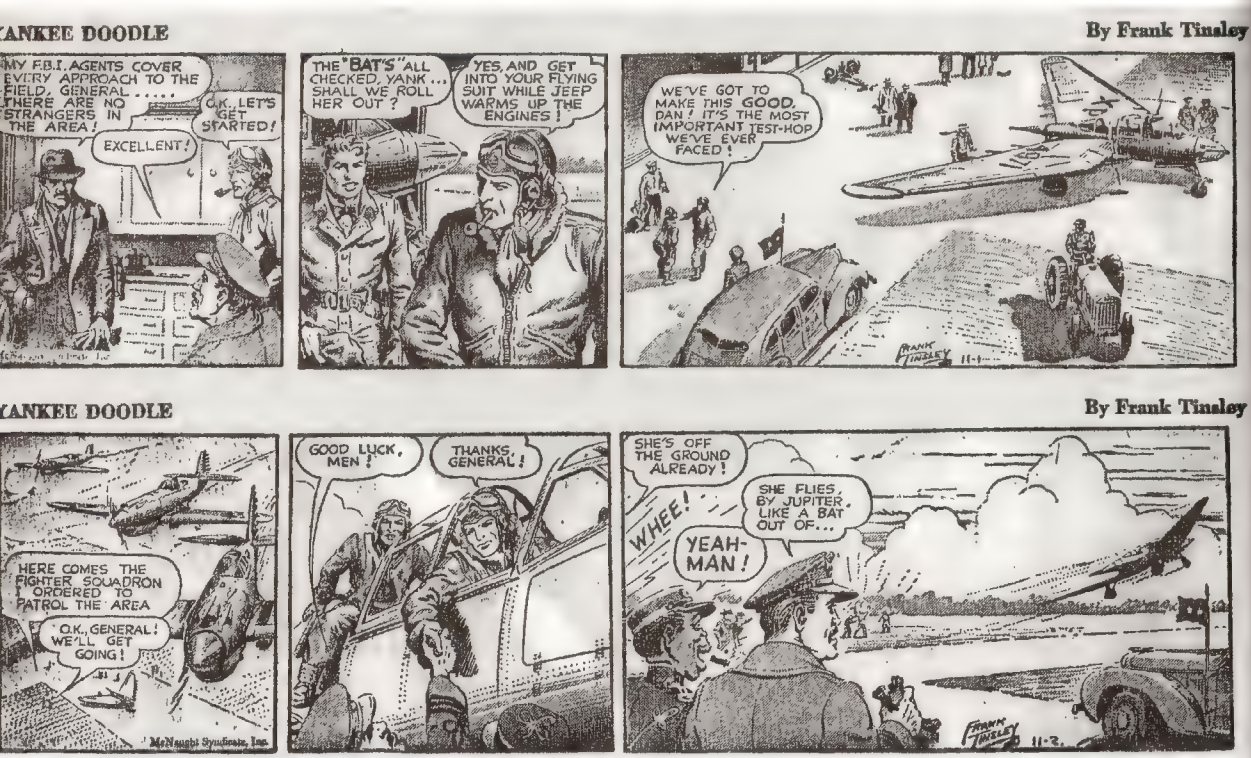
Bill Barnes must have looked like a decent haven to ride out the storm, and since a house name concealed Wheeler-Nicholson's work, there was no downside to his sterling reputation. Except, unceremoniously, he was fired off Bill Barnes after only six novels. The man who replaced him was George L. Eaton.

Chuck Verral recalled the Major as having bad teeth and an odor of deceit about him. It was suspected he was ghosting his Barnes work out to lesser writers, paying them part of his fee, pocketing the difference and taking the credit. How much of it he really wrote may never be guessed, much less known. The Major turned in his last Barnes novel, *The Secret Empire*, in June 1934. Six months later he was a publisher. From the sequence of events, it's pretty clear if he hadn't been fired off Bill Barnes, there might never have been a DC Comics and all its universe of characters.

To be perfectly blunt, the Major's Bill Barnes novels were dreadful and boring. At that time Street & Smith was publishing *Doc Savage*, and they clearly saw Barnes as a flying Doc Savage, surrounded by a squadron of friends. The difference between the Barnes novels and Lester Dent's Docs is the difference between Joe Shuster's Superman and Neal Adams'—they don't compare at all. Bill Barnes was aimed at aviation fans who liked their aircraft sleek, sexy and about five years ahead of the technological cutting edge. Wheeler-Nicholson loaded his stories down with wildly implausible superplanes for Bill to fly, like an ungainly jet-powered proto-helicopter called the Bumblebee and an absurd flying submarine he called the Porpoise, while relegating Barnes' crew to flying the boringly realistic Snorters. Readers no doubt howled between snores of boredom at the Major's—or whoever's—stultifying prose. And having blown a good thing, Wheeler-Nicholson was forced into the doubtful business of publishing.

But there's more to Nicholson's comics career than failed publisher. He seemed big on recycling old ideas.

Starting in *More Fun* #9, Leo O'Melia drew an aviation serial strip called "Bob Merritt, Gentleman Adventurer and Inventor, and his Flying Pals." Beautifully rendered, it's almost totally forgotten today. So forgotten that it takes a pulp fan like me to recognize the storyline for what it really is—the first Bill Barnes novel, *Hawks of the Golden Crater*! It's all there—the quest for an arctic volcano gold mine. Bob Merritt and his young sidekick Dicky Saunders are clearly Bill Barnes and *his* young sidekick, Sandy Sanders. They fly


YANKEE DOODLE
By Frank Tinsley
MY F.B.I. AGENTS COVER EVERY APPROACH TO THE FIELD, GENERAL ..... THERE ARE NO STRANGERS IN THE AREA!
O.K., LET'S GET STARTED!
EXCELLENT!
THE "BAT'S" ALL CHECKED, YANK... SHALL WE ROLL HER OUT?
YES, AND GET INTO YOUR FLYING SUIT WHILE JEEP WARMS UP THE ENGINES!
WE'VE GOT TO MAKE THIS GOOD, DAN! IT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT TEST-HOP WE'VE EVER FACED!
FRANK TINSLEY 11-1
YANKEE DOODLE
By Frank Tinsley
HERE COMES THE FIGHTER SQUADRON I ORDERED TO PATROL THE AREA
O.K., GENERAL! WE'LL GET GOING!
McNaught Syndicate, Inc.
GOOD LUCK, MEN!
THANKS, GENERAL!
SHE'S OFF THE GROUND ALREADY!
WHEE!
SHE FLIES BY JUPITER, LIKE A BAT OUT OF...
YEAH-MAN!
FRANK TINSLEY 11-2

planes identical to Bill's famous Snorters, while Bill—I mean Bob—operates a stubby rocket-powered aircraft called the Bumble Bee. The villain, Monk Morton, is the same. Nicholson hadn't even bothered to change Monk's name! Enough *had* been changed to safeguard Street & Smith's copyright. The company was usually pretty generous about allowing authors to keep secondary rights. But in this case, I wonder if anyone knew that novel was being recycled?

I can't prove it of course, but I would strongly suspect that the anonymous scripter of "Bob Merritt" is no less than publisher Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson himself!

Certainly, the Major was feeding his staff ideas. In the very first issue of *New Fun*, a feature called "Super Police" showcased Rex of the Super-Police of 2023, who piloted a combination stratoplane/submarine called the Hi-Lo in pursuit of the Pirate Wizard. It was a perfect steal of Bill Barnes' old Porpoise. Writer Ken Fitch and artist Clemens "Clem" Gretta are credited, both actual people, so we know Wheeler-Nicholson wasn't lurking behind a pen name here.

In 1940, Street & Smith launched its own comic book line. One of their earliest titles was *Bill Barnes Comics*. It enjoyed a good run, but no one—including S&S—ever suspected that they had been beaten into comics with their own hero.

KINGS OF COMICS: How JEWS TRANSFORMED THE COMIC BOOK INDUSTRY

PART III: THE BRONZE AGE (1979-PRESENT)

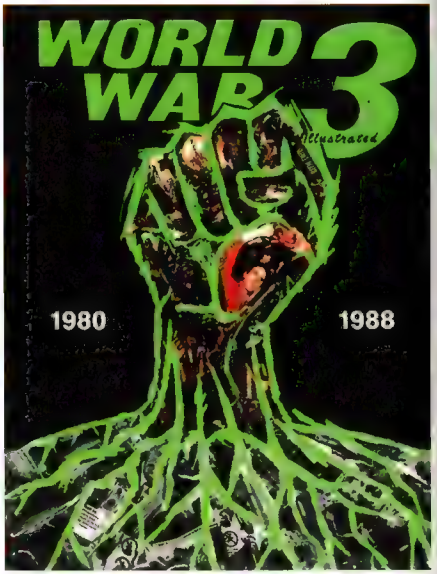
by Arie Kaplan

PC
$1.00
WHEN ITS CITIZENS SUDDENLY VANISH, A SMALL TOWN BECOMES "DEATH-HIVE, U.S.A.!"
IN DEFENSE OF OUR GALAXY
CAPTAIN VICTORY
AND THE GALACTIC RANGERS
#2
LET'S HAVE IT SPACEMAN! WHAT'S THAT-THAT "THING?!!"
THE BEGINNING OF MASS TERROR, SHERIFF!
Kirby & Thibodeaux

Captain Victory and the Galactic Rangers #2 (Pacific), January 1982.

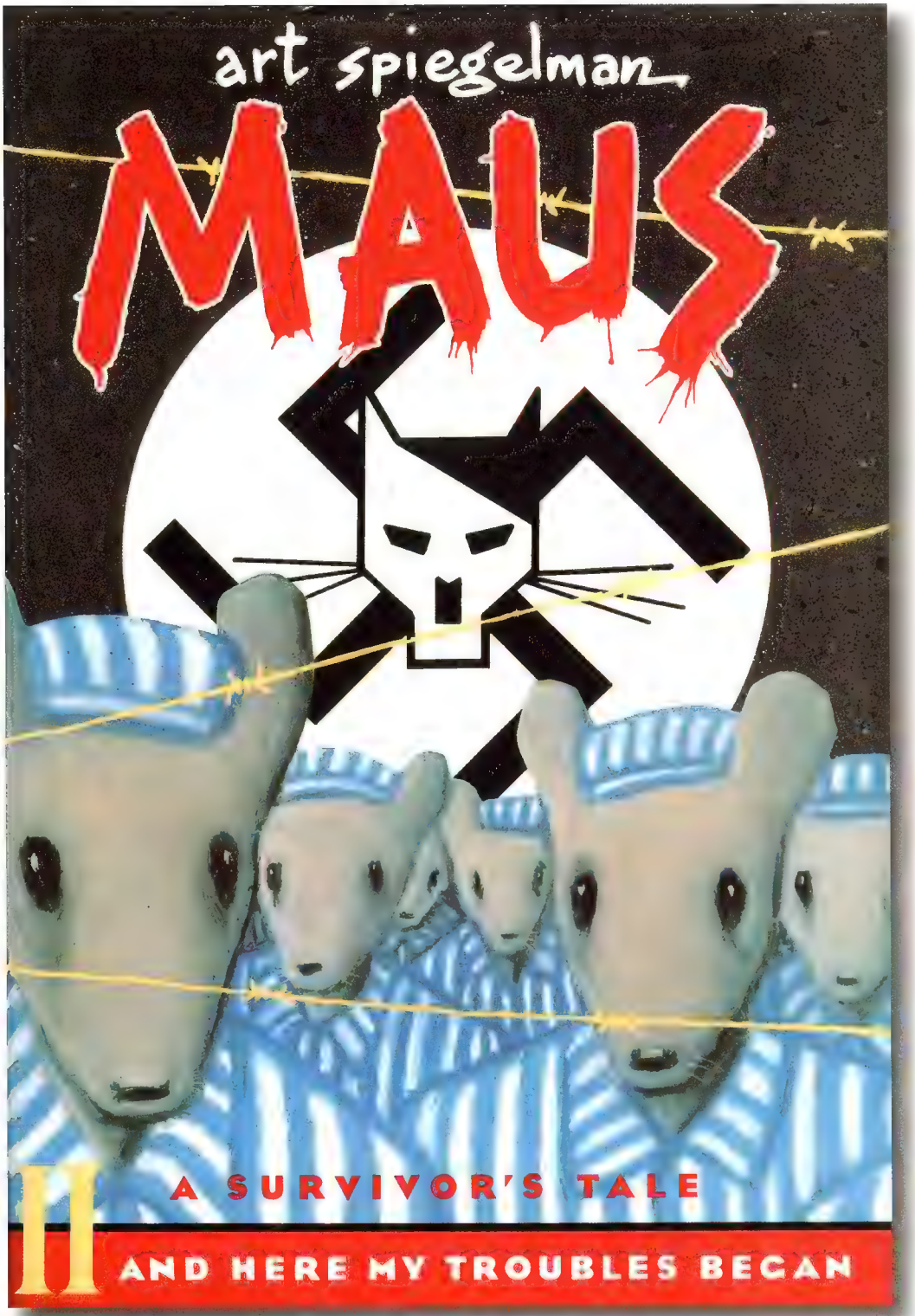
DO YOU USE
RAW
PAGES FROM THE RARE FIRST 3 ISSUES OF THE COMICS MAGAZINE FOR DAMNED INTELLECTUALS!
EDITED BY ART SPIEGELMAN AND FRANÇOISE MOULY

Read Yourself Raw (Raw Books/Pantheon Books), 1987.



World War III Illustrated (Top Shelf Comix) 1988.

Ever since the late 1970s, comics have turned more introspective and artistically ambitious. As in the Golden and Silver Ages, Jewish comics creators have been at the cutting edge, producing works that probe Jewish history, showcase Jewish characters, and comment on spiritual and social issues. These artists have ushered in what may be termed "the Bronze Age" of comics—not because it's less esteemed than the Golden or Silver Ages, but because it is free of rose-colored gloss and glitter, and reflects the realities of the world in which we live.

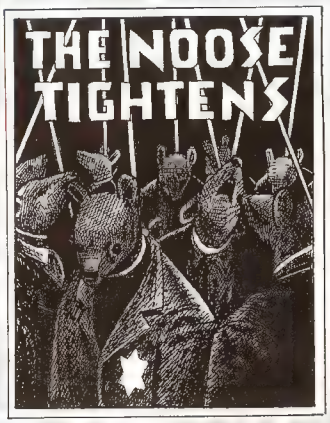


Art Spiegelman forever changed the perception of comics with his Pulitzer Pize winning *Maus : A survivor's Tale* (Book II pictured).

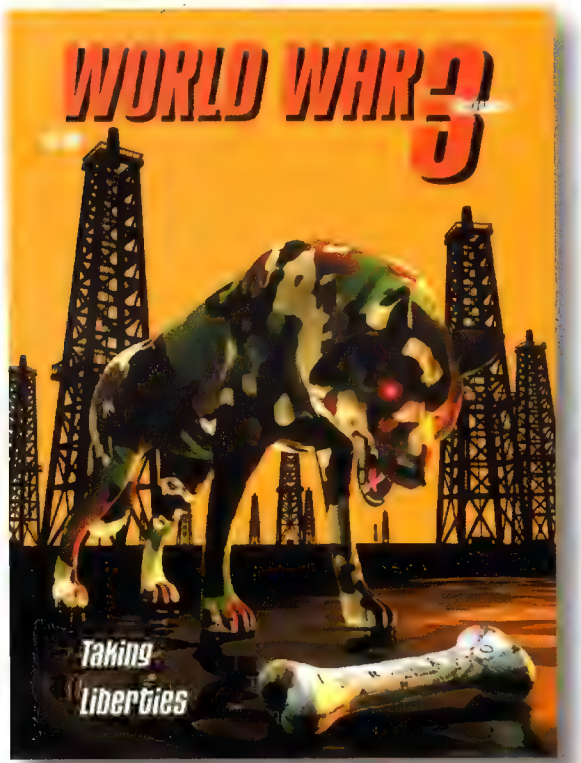
From Comix to Graphics

"What I wanted to make was something I'd thought about as a result of reading '60s fanzines...the Great American Novel, but in comics form."

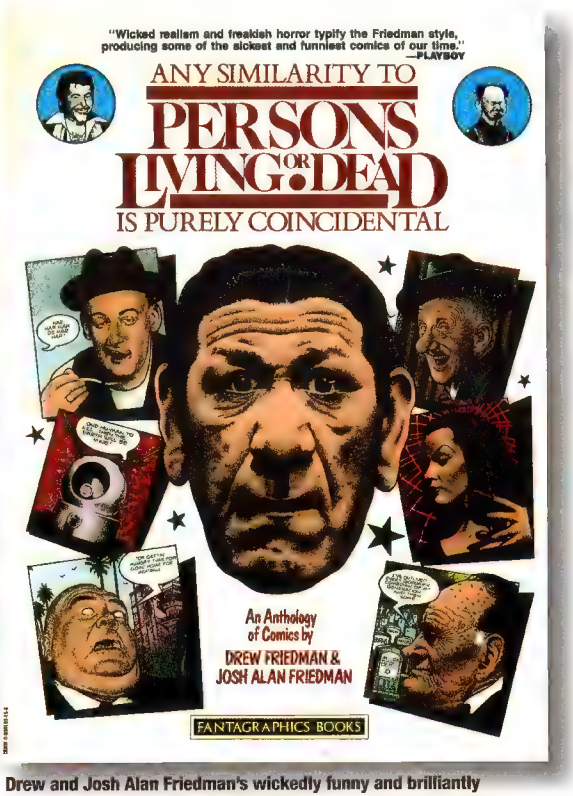
–Art Spiegelman, on the inspiration for Maus



By the late '70s, underground comics were history, and superhero titles once again dominated the genre. Frustrated by the lack of outlets for political graphics and comics, cartoonists Peter Kuper and Seth Tobocman introduced *World War 3 Illustrated* (1979), a self-published magazine committed to the pursuit of social justice through comics. "My parents had marched against the Vietnam War in the early '60s," says Kuper, "so for me as a cartoonist, social commentary was a natural transition." Along with newer comic book companies like Fantagraphics Books, First Comics, Pacific Comics and Dark Horse Publishing, *World War 3 Illustrated* formed the vanguard of what would come to be known as "independent comics" or the "alternative comics press." Dozens of independent publishers sprang up, some debuting works by neophytes such as Dave Sim, creator of *Cerebus*; others featuring the work of established Jewish comics pros like Jack Kirby—who in 1981, for the first time in his career, could create a character, Captain Victory (published by

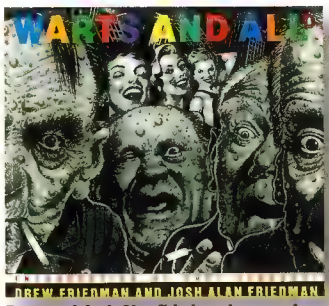


Peter Kuper's and Seth Tobocman's *World War 3 Illustrated* (Top Shelf Comix, 1979), a self-published magazine committed to the pursuit of social justice through comics.


"Wicked realism and freakish horror typify the Friedman style, producing some of the sickest and funniest comics of our time." —PLAYBOY
ANY SIMILARITY TO
PERSONS LIVING OR DEAD
IS PURELY COINCIDENTAL
An Anthology of Comics by
DREW FRIEDMAN & JOSH ALAN FRIEDMAN
FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

Drew and Josh Alan Friedman's wickedly funny and brilliantly illustrated collection, *Any Similarity to Persons Living or Dead is Purely Coincidental* (Fantagraphics Book, 1986).

MY WORLD
"THIS IS MY WORLD THIS IS THE WORLD I LOVE" -- AL FELDSTEIN, WRITTEN FOR WALLY WOOD WHO YEARS LATER BLEW HIS BRAINS OUT. ANY CONNECTION? ANYBODY'S GUESS. IN OUR CAGE IT SHOULD READ "OUR WORLD", AS JOSH WROTE MANY OF THE COMICS. ONWARD... A WORLD OF DISFRANCHISED ELEVATOR MEN, TOSSED ASIDE BY MECHANICAL BUTTONS.
A WORLD OF BELOVED, DELIGHTFUL MEMORABLE CHARACTERS, ENJOYED BY MILLIONS. CHARACTERS TO LOVE, CHERISH AND IDENTIFY WITH. CHARACTERS WHO SHOULD BE MERCHANDISED, SO WE CAN REAP MILLIONS OFF OF THEM...
DREW
FIFTY YEARS OF CARTOON FUN ALL FOR YOU.
ELEVATOR OPERATOR OF NYC
HEY, MORE TIME AT OTTO'S BEFORE I GET DUMPED INTA POTTER'S FIELD!
I ENJOY BEING EXPLOITED, I TRULY DO.
GOD BLESS TRINI LOPEZ
I LITERALLY HAVE TO FIGHT OFF THE GROUPIES.
MIXED DRINKS
SUNDAY
LAFF AT US!
A WORLD OF HATEFUL, [illegible]
HOLD IT. FRIEND? YOU'RE A FUCKING CARTOONIST. I'VE NEVER HEARD OF YOU AND I NEVER WILL. INCLUDE ME OUT OF THIS SHIT, OKAY? JERK OFF.
OKAY, IT IS A WORLD OF ENTERTAINMENT, THE KEY WORD. A SIMPLE EQUATION: SOME GOOD SHARP ENTERTAINMENT = A HEARTY BOWEL MOVEMENT FOR THE ENTERTAINEE, LATER.
BECAUSE WE LOVE YOU. WE LIVE TO ENTERTAIN YOU...
LET US ENTERTAIN YOU...
A JOYOUS WORLD OF GEEKS AND FREAKS...
A HAPPY-NITEMARE WORLD OF CHEAP AMUSEMENT PARKS, BIRTHDAY CLOWNS AND WOODEN CHILDHOOD FRIENDS. A WORLD OF FUN AND FROLIC. ANYTHING FOR A YUK. SO PLEASE DON'T SUE. OKAY? ENJOY
THRILL
SMILE NO MATTER WHAT
END



Drew and Josh Alan Friedman's second collection of stories and art *Warts and All* (Penguin Books, 1990).

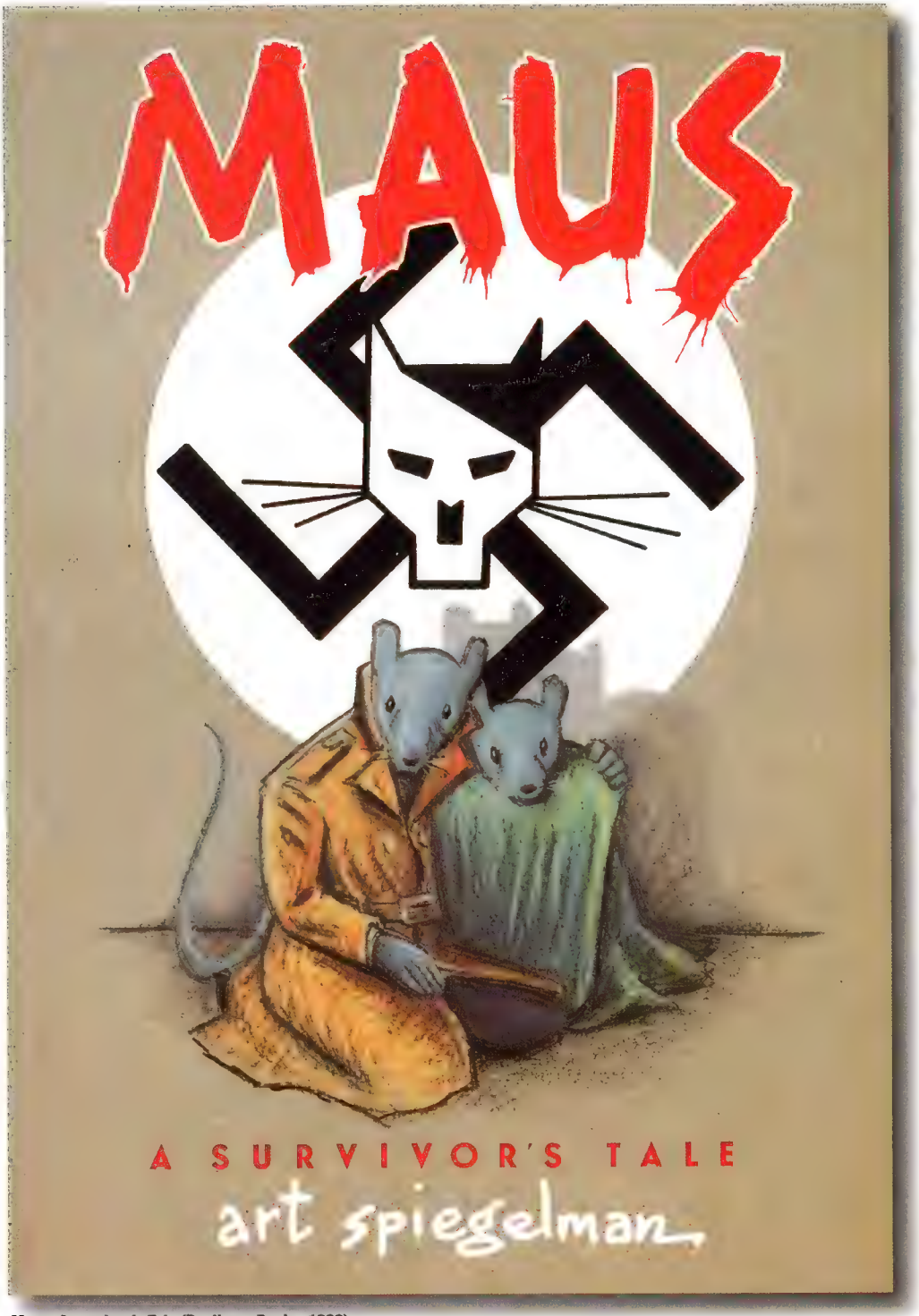
THE SHERIFF DELIVERS A MAYBERRY WELCOME TO THE STRANGER
WHAT BUSINESS WOULD YOU BE HAVIN HERE?
I JUST WANT SOME GAS
WE DON'T RIGHTLY CARE FOR YOUR KIND IN THESE PARTS
THAT'S A PISS POOR ANSWER SMART BOY GET OUTA DAWELL OUT DAT CAR!
SHERIFF TAYLOR DOES HIS DUTY
DINT YOU HEAR ME BOY? AN SAID GET OUT DAT GOD-DAMN CAR!
WHAT IN GOD'S NAME?
SUDDENLY AUNT BEA STRIKES!
crack
A SPEEDY TRIAL WAS HELD AT THE GAS STATION THE DECISION WAS UNANIMOUS...
GOT THE ROPE BARN?
LATER THAT EVENING...
CAN WE HAVE SOME ATOPIE NOW, AIN'T BEA?
END

ABOVE: Josh and Drew Friedman's hilarious take on Wally Wood's "My World." LEFT: The Friedmans' biting satire of *The Andy Griffith Show*.

Pacific Comics), that was his alone, and not the property of Marvel or DC.

In 1980, Art Spiegelman and his wife Francoise Mouly would take the comics magazine genre to a new height. Their brainchild, *RAW*, a self-described "graphix" magazine (the label "comix" was then associated with drugs and sex), sought to blur the distinction between comics and fine art. In one issue, readers were instructed to peel away an acetate layer of line art on the cover to uncover layers of color underneath; and on another now highly collectible issue subtitled "The Torn Again Graphix Magazine," the top right corner of every cover was torn off by hand and clipped to the page, so that each copy would be unique, in essence an original work of art. Adding to the magazine's "high art" image was the inclusion of works by several European cartoonists (Joost Swarte of the Netherlands and Jacques Tardi of France) as well as edgy artwork from political cartoonist Sue Coe, retro stylists Charles Burns and "King of Punk Art" painter Gary Panter. Established underground cartoonists such as Robert Crumb still made the occasional appearance, but the spotlight was on newer talent, including Jewish artists Drew Friedman, Ben Katchor, and Mark Newgarden. Typical of *RAW*'s sharp-edged social criticism was Friedman's parody of *The Andy Griffith Show*, which depicted how an African American motorist might have been treated had he driven through a real southern town in the 1950s, not the gentle, sanitized Mayberry depicted on TV.

RAW was an instant success. The initial print run of



Maus: A survivor's Tale (Pantheon Books, 1986).

I TELL YOU, THERE'S A POGROM GOING ON IN GERMANY TODAY!
ONE FELLOW TOLD US OF HIS COUSIN WHAT WAS LIVING IN GERMANY...
...HE HAD TO SELL HIS BUSINESS TO A GERMAN AND RUN OUT FROM THE COUNTRY WITHOUT EVEN THE MONEY.
AM I A FILTHY JEW
IT WAS VERY HARD THERE FOR THE JEWS-TERRIBLE!
ANOTHER FELLOW TOLD US OF A RELATIVE IN BRANDENBERG- THE POLICE CAME TO HIS HOUSE AND NO ONE HEARD AGAIN FROM HIM.
This Town is Jew Free
IT WAS MANY, MANY SUCH STORIES- SYNAGOGUES BURNED, JEWS BEATEN WITH NO REASON, WHOLE TOWNS PUSHING OUT ALL JEWS- EACH STORY WORSE THAN THE OTHER.
LET'S HOPE THOSE NAZI GANGSTERS GET THROWN OUT OF POWER!
JUST PRAY THAT THEY DON'T START A WAR!!
33

In Spiegelman's story, Jews are portrayed by mice and the Nazis by cats. Here Spiegelman shows the growing wave of anti-semitism and the hope that National Socialism is merely a passing phase.

5000 copies sold out, and sales ballooned to 35,000 copies by 1987 with issue #8—an impressive record for a small-press magazine with virtually no advertising or PR budget, relying solely on word of mouth to boost sales. Well received in art and graphics circles, *RAW* took non-mainstream comics to a new level of artistic respectability. Eschewing the overwhelmingly political bent of *World War 3 Illustrated*, *RAW* championed personal artistic expression and inspired the creation of several critically respected comics anthology magazines, including Monte Beauchamp's *Blab!* and Dark Horse's *Cheval Noir*.

Perhaps Spiegelman's greatest achievement in *RAW* was publishing his refined and reworked version of *Maus*, first conceived as a three-page comic strip and printed in a 1972 issue of the underground comic book *Funny Aminals* (misspelling intentional). Spiegelman utilized the cartooning convention of anthropomorphized animals—mice symbolizing Jews, pigs as Poles, dogs as Americans and cats as Nazis—in telling the story of his father's Holocaust experience. "In doing that three-page strip," Spiegelman recalls, "I

Maus confronts the mass killings of Babi-Yar.

realized that I had a lot of unfinished business. There was much more here that I could tap into." So, starting in 1978, Spiegelman began interviewing his father Vladek, and, over the next three years, he had collected enough material to write and illustrate the story of his father's survival and its impact on his own psyche.

Working on *Maus* became a way for Spiegelman to confront his own demons. "I was interested to learn (from studies of survivors' children) that some of these children put themselves in extreme situations, like mental hospitals, to experience what their parents went through," he explained in a 1987 *Reform Judaism* magazine interview. "I was hospitalized in 1968, and even at the time I echoed my father's experience. It was safer to be in a state mental hospital than at Auschwitz, but nevertheless I mimicked him, collecting scraps of string, for instance, in case they would come in handy later. Drawing *Maus* is a far more effective way of recapitulating what I need to recapitulate in order to understand my situation." And "at a certain point," Spiegelman recalls, "I went to see a therapist who had been a Holocaust survivor of Auschwitz. He helped me get past some (mental) blocks into (proceeding with) the volume."

After serializing *Maus, Volume I* in *RAW*, Spiegelman began looking for a publisher, a several-year quest that led to dozens of rejection letters—until, finally, Pantheon made him an unusual offer: the publisher agreed to proceed only if the completed work came out that very year. It was a curious demand, Spiegelman thought, as he had only completed the first half of the book, and that portion had taken eight years. Then he learned that an article had appeared in *The New York Times Book Review* which, he says, "talked about this work in progress in comics form that was the important literary achievement of our age"—astonishing coverage given the fact that "the *Times Book Review* never covered works in progress and certainly never comics-related material." Spiegelman would have been happy waiting until he'd finished the whole saga and

One of Spiegelman's effective and powerful chapter title pages.

IN THE BARRACK WAS A KAPO - A SUPERVISOR - HE WAS SCREAMING AND KICKING, WHATEVER HE COULD.
LINE UP IN ROWS OF FIVE, YOU SHITS! STAND STRAIGHT!
NOW LIE ON YOUR BELLIES. QUICK!
STAND UP! LIE DOWN!
STAND UP! FASTER!
HE WAS ALSO A PRISONER, A PEASANT FROM THE GERMAN PART OF POLAND.
LIE DOWN!
WE DID SUCH "SPORT" ALL DAY - KICKING, HITTING, YELLING - TIL SOME DROPPED DEAD. THEN MORE.

In *Maus*, Poles are depicted as pigs. Here a cruel Polish capo torments his fellow prisoners.

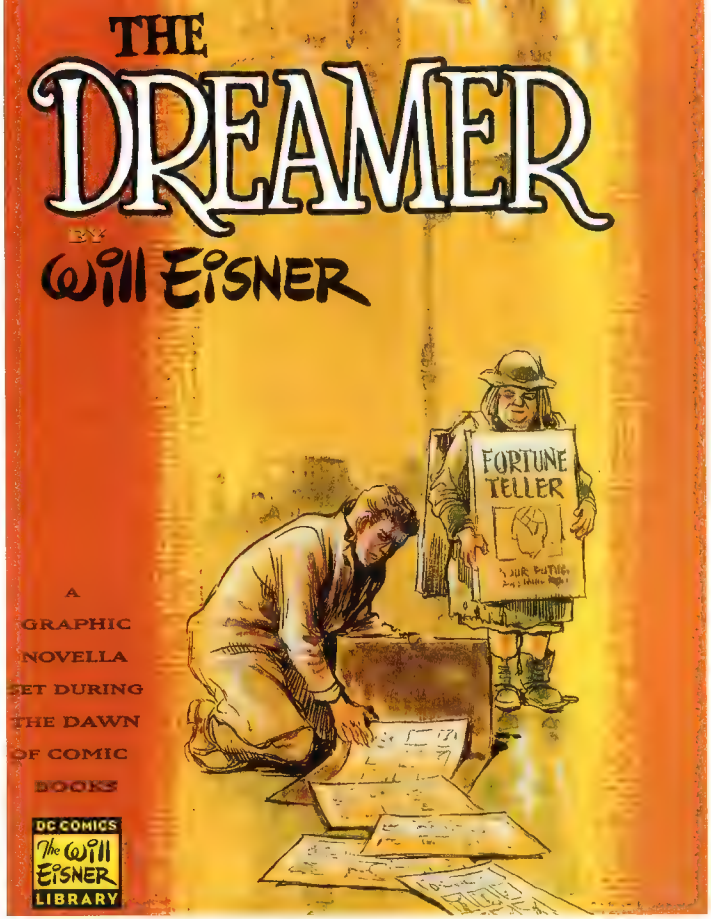
collected it into one big book, but then he heard about a certain animated movie that was already in development. "I was very upset to learn about what would become *An American Tale*, which I'm quite sure was inspired by *Maus*," Spiegelman says. "I didn't want to have my book come out after some giant Spielberg-produced, feature-length animation; I didn't want to be perceived as a twisted version of Spielberg's more delightful and innocent use of mice as Jews. And so I really wanted my book to come out before this film was finished. The only way to do it would be to publish part one immediately, rather than wait till I'd finished part two, which would have been years more. At first Pantheon said, 'Forget it,' but once requests for the book started coming in as a result of the *Times Book Review* piece, they said yes, and then quickly put it out."

Maus's success would forever change how the world of arts and letters viewed comic books. The serious novel-length adult comic book had been attempted with varying degrees of success ever since 1978, when Will Eisner had invented the genre with his graphic novel *A Contract With God*. However, these works had rarely made it into chain bookstores such as Barnes and Noble; nor had any been awarded a Pulitzer Prize, as had *Maus* in 1992, the year after part two was published. It was the coming of age of an art form, a fact noted in *U.S. News and World Report*: "Remember the comic books of your youth? They've grown up…and that's not all. The comics are also winning more respect. Literary honors, respectful reviews, museum exhibits—and even academic attention."

Maus's success would secure for graphic novels a niche in bookstores nationwide. "*Maus* saved non-superhero comics," says legendary feminist cartoonist and comics historian Trina

I TOLD EVERYTHING HOW WE SURVIVED TO HERE...
...AND FROM DACHAU WE CAME OVER BY TRAIN TO-
BANG!
BANG!
AII!
THAT'S JUST MY MEN SIGNALING THAT THEY FOUND A CACHE OF GERMAN AMMO...
THOSE KRAUTS CAN'T HURT YOU ANYMORE. THE ONLY ONES LEFT ARE DEAD OR DYING.

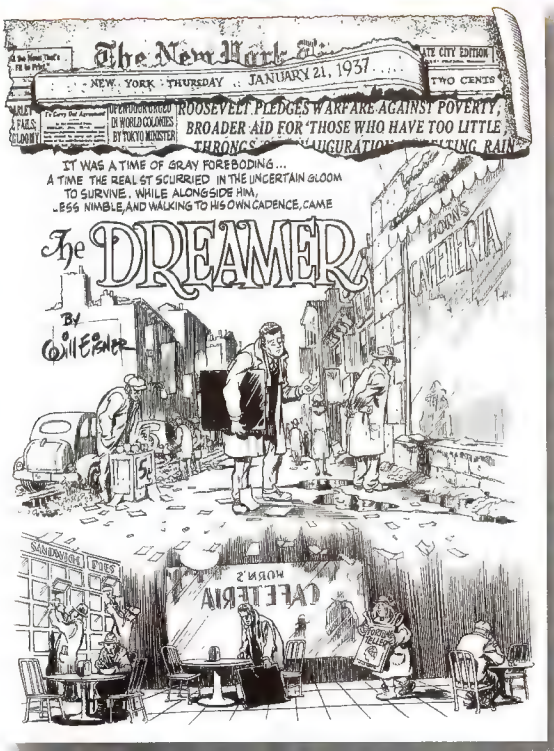
The camp's liberating American soldiers are portrayed as dogs.

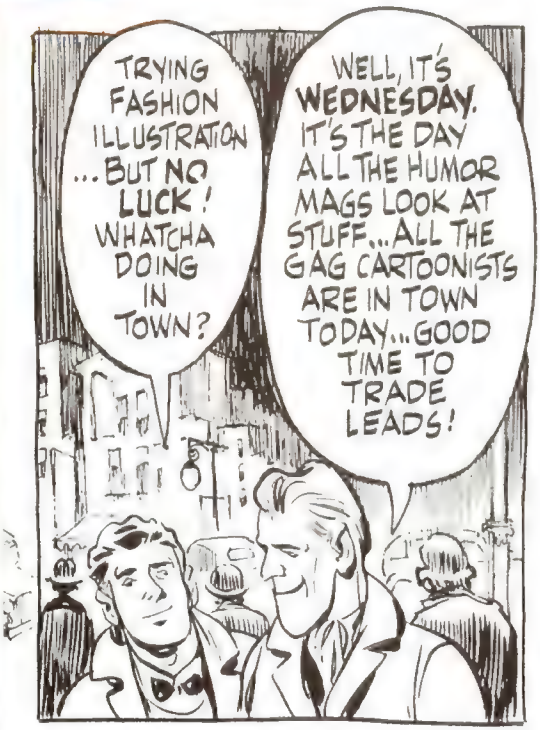


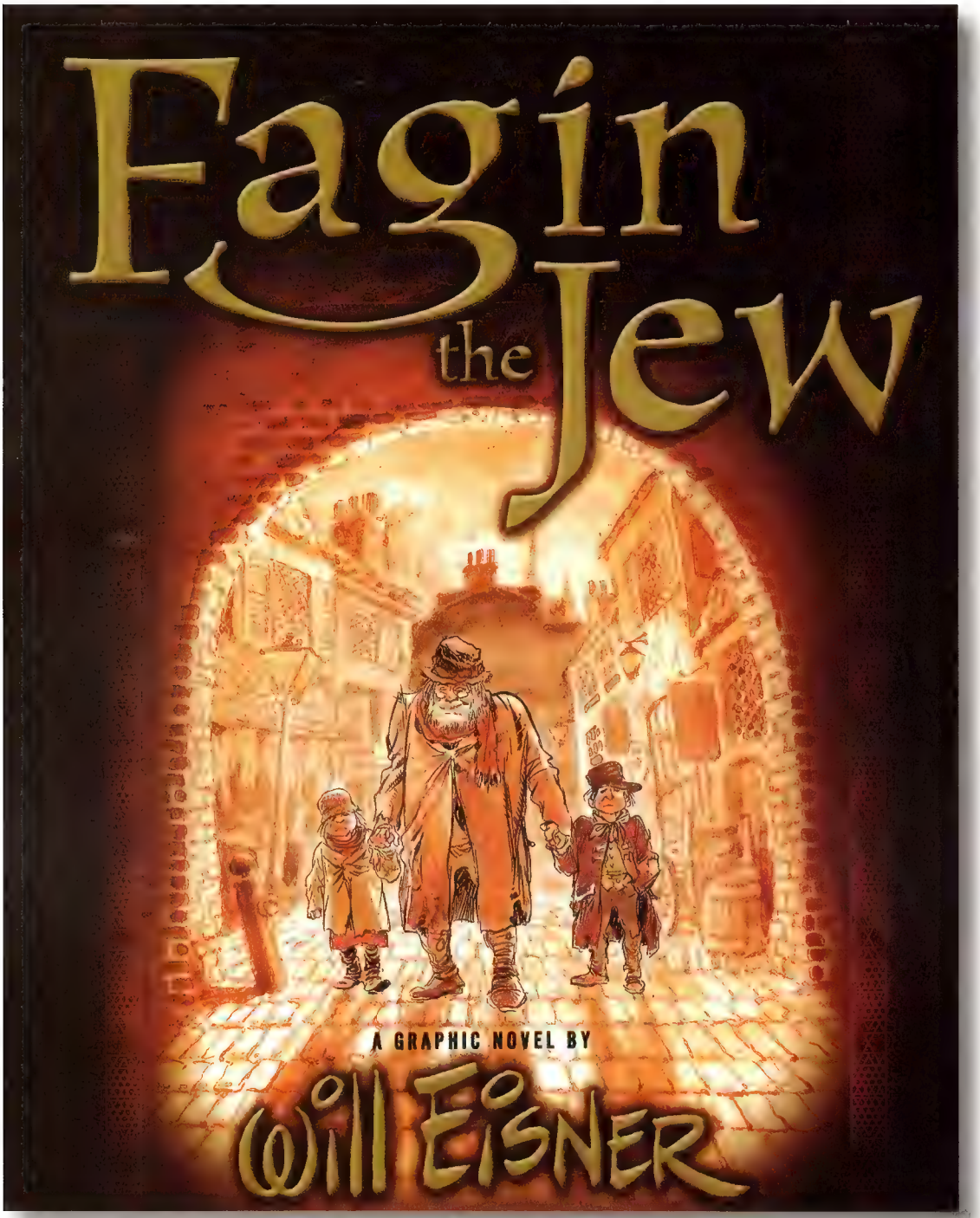
Robbins (*GoGirl!*, *Wonder Woman*). Adds veteran comic book writer/editor Paul Kupperberg (*Checkmate*, *Doom Patrol*): "Suddenly comics didn't have to be guys in superhero costumes. They could be about real people, or mice pretending to be real people. It opened up the genre." *Maus* demonstrated what underground cartoonists like Spiegelman, Diane Noomin and Harvey Pekar had known for decades—that autobiographical comics about everyday people were not only an art form, but one which could strike a chord with the American public.

Once graphic novels were proven a natural medium for exploring intimate, personal issues in a serious manner, Jewish comics creators increasingly utilized the format to explore Jewish history and identity. In 1986, Will Eisner published *The Dreamer*, a semi-autobiographical account of his early days in comics' Golden Age, peopled with characters based on his fellow cartoonists, among them Batman's creator Bob Kane ("Ken Corn"), Eisner's former partner Jerry

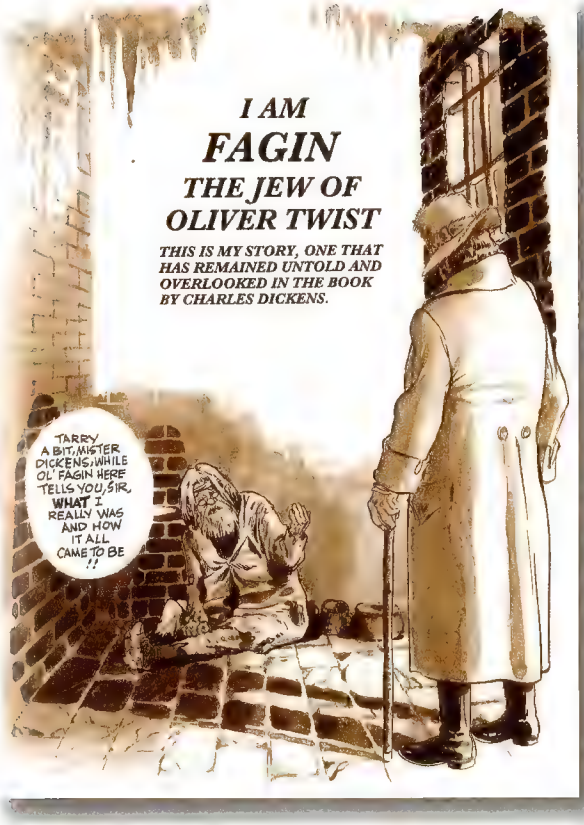
LEFT: Will Eisner's *The Dreamer* (Kitchen Sink Press, 1986). BELOW LEFT: Splash page for *The Dreamer*, which was an autobiographic story of the early days of the comic book industry. BELOW: Eisner (left) as the fictional "Billy Eyron" meets with Batman co-creator (right) Bob Kane "Ken Corn."


The New York
NEW YORK THURSDAY JANUARY 21, 1937
TWO CENTS
ROOSEVELT PLEDGES WARFARE AGAINST POVERTY,
BROADER AID FOR THOSE WHO HAVE TOO LITTLE
IT WAS A TIME OF GRAY FOREBODING...
A TIME THE REALST SCURRIED IN THE UNCERTAIN GLOOM
TO SURVIVE, WHILE ALONGSIDE HIM,
LESS NIMBLE, AND WALKING TO HIS OWN CADENCE, CAME
The DREAMER
By
Will Eisner
HORN'S
CAFETERIA


TRYING FASHION ILLUSTRATION ...BUT NO LUCK! WHATCHA DOING IN TOWN?
WELL, IT'S WEDNESDAY. IT'S THE DAY ALL THE HUMOR MAGS LOOK AT STUFF...ALL THE GAG CARTOONISTS ARE IN TOWN TODAY...GOOD TIME TO TRADE LEADS!



Fagin The Jew (Doubleday, 2003) is Will Eisner's wonderful redefining of the Oliver Twist character Fagin.

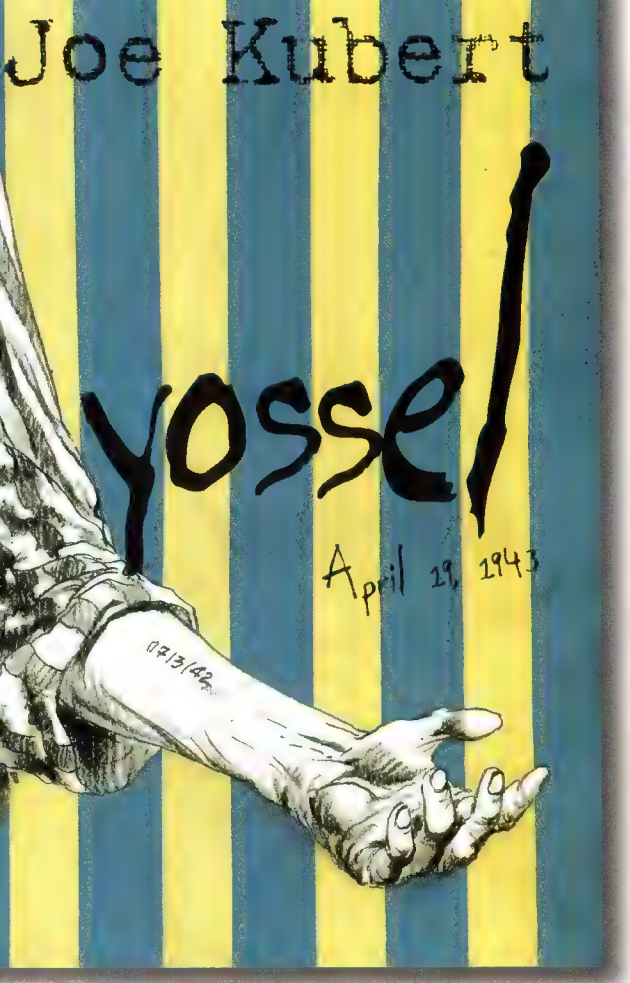

I AM
FAGIN
THE JEW OF
OLIVER TWIST
THIS IS MY STORY, ONE THAT HAS REMAINED UNTOLD AND OVERLOOKED IN THE BOOK BY CHARLES DICKENS.
TARRY A BIT, MISTER DICKENS, WHILE OL' FAGIN HERE TELLS YOU, SIR, WHAT I REALLY WAS AND HOW IT ALL CAME TO BE !!

LEFT: Splash page to *Fagin The Jew*. ABOVE: Fagin's pleas for help are ignored after his father is beaten to death by anti-semites.

Iger ("Jimmy Samson"), and "Billy Eyron" as Eisner himself. In his most recent graphic novel, *Fagin the Jew* (2003), Eisner tells the tale of Oliver Twist from the vantage point of Moses Fagin, the leader of a band of thieves in 19th-century England. "Charles Dickens contributed to the stereotyping of Jews," says Eisner. "He referred to Fagin as 'The Jew' throughout (early editions of) the book. I take exception to that." In truth, he asserts in the book's Afterword, "(Dickens) never intended to defame the Jewish people...but he abetted the prejudice against them. *Oliver Twist* became a staple of juvenile literature, and the stereotype was perpetuated.

"Over the years, while teaching sequential art, my lectures invariably had to confront the issues of stereotype," Eisner writes. "I concluded that there was bad stereotype and good stereotype: intention was the key. Since stereotyping is an essential tool in the language of graphic storytelling, it is incumbent on cartoonists to recognize its impact on social judgment. The memory of their awful use by the Nazis in World War II one hundred years later added evidence to the persistence of evil stereotyping. Combating it became an obsessive pursuit, and I realized that I had no choice but to undertake a truer portrait of Fagin by telling his life story in the only way I could."

Determined to humanize Fagin, Eisner crafted a backstory for the character, chronicling how a sweet child whose father is killed by anti-Semitic hoodlums becomes increasingly hardened as he is victimized because of his Jewish and lower-class origins ("I am Fagin, a member of a dispersed but noble breed!" the protagonist proclaims. "Jews who are often forced by circumstance to survive in the foul frowsy dens and squalid misery of midnight London are not thieves by choice!"). Along the way, Eisner touches on issues of assimilation (Mr. Isaac D'Israeli, a leader of England's Sephardic community, decides to have his children baptized because "as a gentile, my son Benjamin could one day become Prime Minister!") and Jewish pride (young Fagin watches the great Jewish boxer Daniel Mendoza defeat Joe Ward and hears his father exclaim, "Thank God!! Now all England will know that Jews can fight back!"). Eisner also portrays Fagin, hardened criminal that he is, as somehow still retaining the Jewish values and traditions he learned as a child: at the very end of his life, knowing he will soon be hanged before a cheering mob for a crime he did not commit, Fagin reveals to Oliver the



THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE: ***Yossel: April 19, 1943*** **(ibooks, 2003) Joe Kubert's powerful story of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. Kubert's beautiful and evocative pencil drawings reflect the gut wrenching emotion and rawness of this tragic and heroic milestone.**

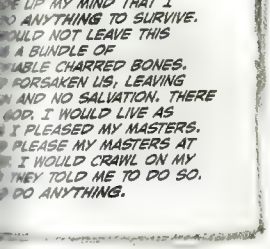
secret location of a long-buried locket, knowing that its contents will forever change the boy's life. Kneeling in prayer on a hard pavement, he recites "*Shema Yisroel Adonai Elohenu Adonai Echod,*" and proclaims to Oliver: "I give you a future."

The cartoonist Joe Kubert (*Ragman, Sgt. Rock*) also confronted anti-Semitism in his recent graphic novel *Yossel: April 19, 1943*, a fictional portrayal of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. As the story unfolds, young Yossel dreams of becoming a comic book artist, but his life unravels when his parents are deported to a concentration camp and he is confined to the ghetto. Tens of thousands of Jews within the ghetto walls are killed, yet Yossel survives because he is able to amuse Nazi soldiers with his cartoon renderings of Nazi superheroes. Eventually Yossel

A Comic Approach to History

"I leaned on the suitcase and my pencil danced across the yellow, creased paper. At first, I thought of my cartoon heroes. Flash Gordon. Tarzan. Jungle Jim. The Phantom. Strong and powerful. They could beat the Nazis. They could take us from this awful place."

–from "Yossel: April 19, 1943" by Joe Kubert


E UP MY MIND THAT I
O ANYTHING TO SURVIVE.
OULD NOT LEAVE THIS
A BUNDLE OF
IABLE CHARRED BONES.
FORSAKEN US, LEAVING
N AND NO SALVATION. THERE
GOD. I WOULD LIVE AS
I PLEASED MY MASTERS.
PLEASE MY MASTERS AT
I WOULD CRAWL ON MY
THEY TOLD ME TO DO SO.
DO ANYTHING.

meets up with ghetto resistance leader Mordecai (modeled on Mordecai Anielewicz) and the two learn the horrible truth about the destination of those who are deported daily from the ghetto. They relay the news to the Jewish Council, but are dismayed by its conciliatory response: "We cannot afford to antagonize them"; "we must be patient…put our trust in God." Mordecai later proclaims: "We will not give up. We can fight. We can kill some of them. We can die like human beings."

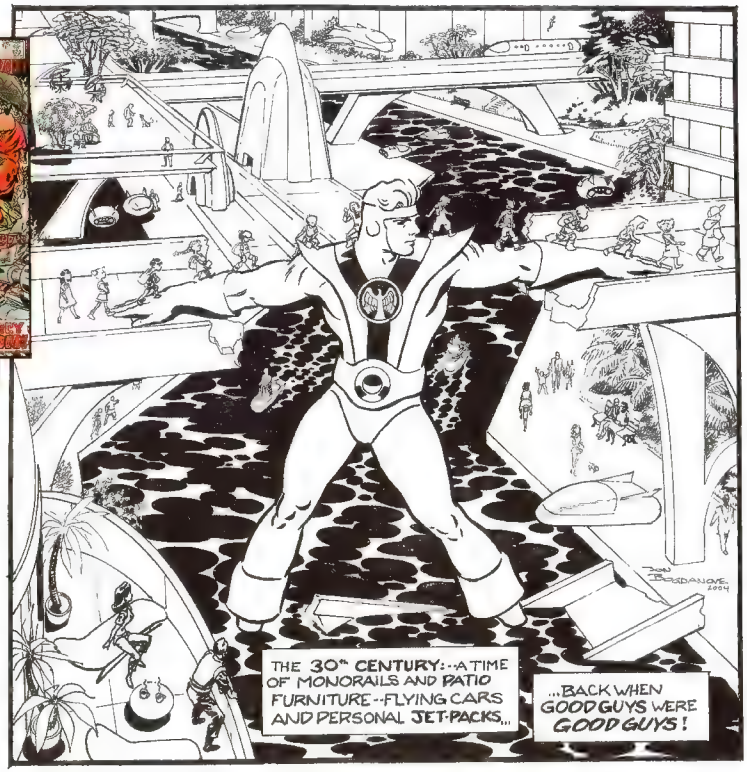
Kubert, now a 78-year-old comic book legend and founder of the only accredited school devoted solely to the art of cartoon graphics, believes that Yossel's fate could have been his own had his family not left Poland for America in 1926, when he was only two months old. "The basis of the story," he says, "is what would have happened had my parents decided not to come to the United States, but to stay in Europe. This is my 'what-if?' story, what my life would have been" as a young cartoonist in the Warsaw Ghetto, as opposed to "a 13-year-old who in 1939 was already doing professional cartooning in the United States." Compared to most comic books and graphic novels, in which the pencil drawings are inked, the pencil drawings in Yossel are laid bare with no ink overlay, so that the audience can absorb the raw power of the pencil sketches, and thus the raw power of the events unfolding before them. Explains Kubert: "It is as if I were doing the sketches in the ghetto the whole time."

Jewish comics writer Judd Winick—who received a Pulitzer nomination for the graphic novel *Pedro and Me* (the story of his friendship with the late Pedro Zamora, a former roommate on MTV's *The Real World* who died of AIDS)—also draws from history in his series, *Caper*, a fictionalized twelve-issue series comprised of three interlocking stories chronicling the Weiss crime family from the turn of the 20th century to the present day. In each story, a different member of the Weiss family is

I WAS FIRST TO GET THROUGH TO THE OTHER SIDE. I STRUGGLED INTO MY WATER-SOAKED CLOTHES THICK WITH CLOYING MUD. I WAS GRATEFUL FOR THE DIRT AND THE DOWNPOUR THAT HELPED CONCEAL US.
THE BOY WAS JUST COMING OUT OF THE HOLE. HIS BODY ARCHED TO AVOID THE BARBED WIRE, AS HE THRUST HIS BUNDLE OF CLOTHES AHEAD. HE WAS ALMOST OUT.
SUDDENLY, A LOOK OF ALARM TIGHTENED ACROSS THE BOY'S FACE. HE CRANED HIS NECK TO LOOK BACK OVER HIS SHOULDER. I SAW THE REASON FOR HIS ALARM; THE HEEL OF HIS SHOE WAS CAUGHT IN THE BARBED WIRE.

SO I WAIT. TIME CREEPS BY, AND I WAIT AND I DRAW. IN THE DARKNESS, BY CANDLELIGHT. MY PENCIL OUTLINES THINGS ON SCRAPS OF PRECIOUS PAPER.
A TYRANNOSAURUS REX APPEARS. I CAN HEAR ITS SCREECHING ROAR, SEE THE LAND IT RULED. WITH TEETH THAT COULD TEAR THE GERMAN SOLDIERS APART.
A NORSEMAN. A VIKING WHO HOLDS HIS SWORD HIGH AND USES HIS SHIELD TO DEFLECT HIS ENEMY'S BLOWS. HE IS STRONG AND POWERFUL. HE COULD VANQUISH ALL EVIL DOERS. MAKE MINCEMEAT OF THE SWASTIKA MURDERERS.
A MAN WITH WINGS. HE WEARS A MASK THAT RESEMBLES AN EAGLE'S HEAD. HE CAN FLY. THE NAZIS COULD NOT TOUCH HIM. HE COULD STRIKE THEM FROM THE SKY, LIKE A GOD. HE COULD RELEASE ALL THE PRISONERS IN THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS.

trying to complete a "caper" of sorts, involving a murder, hence the series' title. In the first story, "Market Street," Jacob (smart and reasonable) and Izzy (a mad-dog killer) are serving as "Toppers" for "Boss" Josef Cohen, a stern yet paternal figure who takes them into his enclave after their father, a smalltime lender, is murdered. Boss owns a big chunk of the city (as the boys explain, "Our job is mostly to hurt people who forget that."), but that doesn't stop him from putting on the trappings of being a committed Jew who chastises Jacob and Izzy for not measuring up ("You're late, boys. Bad enough that you missed *shul*, but you show up late for the reception of my boy's bar mitzvah. And *underdressed*. I pay you gentlemen enough, I'd expect you could shop at a better haberdashery."). With the passage of time, Jacob and Izzy begin to realize that Boss is manipulating them and nearly everyone else in town—and they devise a caper to stop the man who has long served as their surrogate father. "In the story there are no good guys," Winick points out; "even the protagonists aren't good guys, and for them Judaism is more their culture than their religion. And the man who is supposedly the most pious man in the community (Boss Cohen) is the worst one by far! When you look at (stories about) the Italian mafia, these are the men who are supposedly good Catholics. How often do we get to portray Jews in these stories? I don't mean in a good or bad way. When we see Jews in gangster stories, they're always miserly, they're always accountants, they're diamond merchants, lawyers. But in this case, they're the gangsters, and they don't discuss what it is to be a Jew; it's just who they are." Like Eisner's portrayal of Fagin, Winick explores the effects of poverty and prejudice upon Jews who have come to the misguided conclusion that crime is the only viable path to financial and emotional survival. But as Winick points out, "This is not (a story) about redemption; it's about revenge."


"CROSSING GUARD"
COLOSSAL BOY
JON BOGDANOVE
THE 30th CENTURY:..A TIME OF MONORAILS AND PATIO FURNITURE--FLYING CARS AND PERSONAL JET-PACKS,,,
...BACK WHEN GOOD GUYS WERE GOOD GUYS!

Writer (now DC Comics publisher) Paul Levitz fashioned Legion of Super-Heroes member Colossal Boy as Jewish (above drawing by Jon Bogdanove). In *Legion of Super-Heroes* #308 (DC, February 1984), Levitz's story deals with Colossal Boy's interfaith marriage to an alien.

Howard Chaykin's Jewish anti-hero Reuben Flagg from the groundbreaking series *American Flagg*.

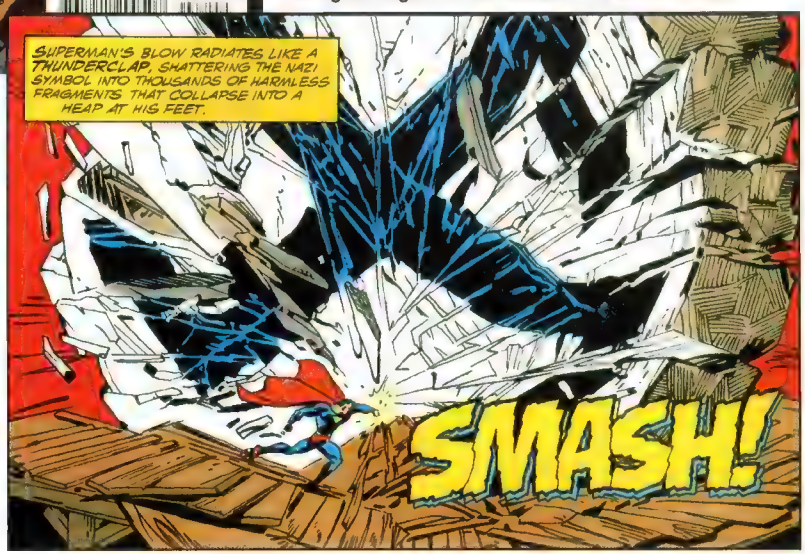
Postmodern Jewish Comics Icons

"They're all Jewish, superheroes. Superman, you don't think he's Jewish? Coming over from the old country, changing his name like that. Clark Kent, only a Jew would pick a name like that for himself."

–From "The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay" by Michael Chabon

SUPERMAN RACES THROUGH THE POLISH COUNTRYSIDE AT SPEEDS TOO FAST TO SEE
THANKS TO THE WIND, I'M ALMOST DRY
LOOKS LIKE A VILLAGE UP AHEAD
THE MAN OF STEEL ARRIVES AT THE REMAINS OF A BOMBED-OUT SHTETL, STILL LITTERED WITH THE DECOMPOSING BODIES OF ITS MURDERED RESIDENTS
MY FIRST GLIMPSE OF NAZI HANDIWORK
DOWNING ABANDONED CLOTHING FROM THE NEARBY SOUNDS OF FORCED LABOR AND A SUDDEN HAIL OF GRIEF
A FRIGHTENING MORBID DETAIL—BUT SOMEONE'S ANGUISH
WHY THE TEARS? IS IT NOT AN HONOR TO VISIT YOUR OLD HOMETOWN, TO BURY YOUR OWN DEAD!
BUT—THIS—IS MY SON!
WELL, YOU NO LONGER HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT WHAT SORT OF MAN HE WILL GROW TO BECOME
DAMN YOU
TO THE LIME PIT WITH YOU BOTH—EH PAPA?
BANG!
TWO MORE BODIES FALL INTO THE MASS GRAVE
ANY MORE OUTBURSTS AND YOU ALL WILL JOIN YOUR FRIENDS IN THE HOLE.
I WANT ALL BODIES BURIED AND COVERED IN LIME, SO YOU CAN SPREAD THE NICE TOPSOIL AND ALL HAVE A BEAUTIFUL GREEN LAWN, SAP
UPON HIS ARRIVAL, SUPERMAN DOESN'T NOTICE THE APPROACH OF ANOTHER SOLDIER FROM BEHIND
SO MANY GUNS TRAINED ON THE CAPTIVES

In *Superman: The Man of Steel* #80-82 (DC, Jun-Aug 1998), Louise Simonson and Jon Bogdanove weave a fascinating story where Superman is thrown back in time to World War II. Superman battles Nazi sympathisers in Metropolis, encounters the Nazi brutality of Babi-Yar, and fights alongside Jewish civillians in the Warsaw Ghetto.


SUPERMAN'S BLOW RADIATES LIKE A THUNDERCLAP, SHATTERING THE NAZI SYMBOL INTO THOUSANDS OF HARMLESS FRAGMENTS THAT COLLAPSE INTO A HEAP AT HIS FEET.
SMASH!

What was in the '70s a trickle of openly Jewish superheroes (such as Chris Claremont's X-Men character Shadowcat, aka Kitty Pryde; and Paul Kupperberg's Supergirl villain Blackstarr, aka Rachel Berkowtiz) became a flood in the '80s.

Among this new generation of explicitly Jewish characters was Reuben Flagg, the protagonist of artist/writer Howard Chaykin's *American Flagg* (originally published by First Comics), a futuristic story centered around Flagg's mission as deputy of the Chicago branch of a law enforcement unit known as the Plexus Rangers. It is 2031, and America's politicians and corporate elite have

resettled in various quadrants of outer space, leaving American cities to the mercy of vicious warlords. A former television actor, Flagg has lost his job as an adult film actor because he is deemed an "undesirable bohemian" with leftist political views; American viewers don't realize he's been replaced by a hologram. Down on his luck, he joins the Plexus Rangers, where he is respected, even revered. Chaykin's message in *American Flagg* is that we must guard against Nazi-style totalitarianism, which can strike at any time. He also makes a personal statement in giving his protagonist a Jewish identity. "I'm no longer afraid, ashamed, or uninterested enough in my personal background to keep it out of the work," Chaykin has stated. "I'm no longer a Jew masquerading as a gentile through comics."

Meanwhile, at DC Comics, publisher and writer Paul Levitz decided to fashion a Jewish genealogy for the company's 30th-century superhero Colossal Boy, who in *Legion of Superheroes* grows to a gigantic size in order to fend off evil. Knowing that Colossal Boy's real name is Gim Allon, a name that reminded him of former Israeli Cabinet member Yigal

GROWING CHILDREN NEED MORE THAN OLD MEN.
PLEASE. TAKE MINE! I WON'T EAT IT.
WHAT DO THOSE LINES MEAN?
YOU SAID HE SHOULD GO FAST- THEY SHOW SPEED.
WHAT ARE YOU BOYS DOING?
BARUCH'S DRAWING OUR ANGEL AGAIN! I MAKE UP THE STORIES AND HE MAKES UP THE PICTURES!
SUCH A MUSCULAR ANGEL? AND WHAT'S THIS ON HIS CHEST?
IT'S HIS MAGIC SYMBOL, SEE? AND HE'S STRONG SO HE CAN FIGHT TANKS AND GUNS AND--
HE WOULD SAVE US:
HE SOUNDS MORE OF A GOLEM THAN AN ANGEL
A GOLEM?
YOUR BUBEH NEVER TOLD YOU STORIES OF GOLEMS!?
THE GOLEM WAS A STATUE THAT CAME TO LIFE WHEN THE WRITTEN NAME OF GOD WAS PUT IN ITS MOUTH. HE WOULD THEN BECOME A FEARSOME, MIGHTY CREATURE THAT WOULD DRIVE AWAY ENEMIES AND SAVE THE PEOPLE!
YOU BOYS GET IN BED AND I'LL TELL YOU MORE.
LATER, WHEN ALL ARE ASLEEP, SUPERMAN PREPARES TO SLIP OUT INTO THE NIGHT...
I'M NOT A GOLEM AND I'M NO ANGEL! BUT IT'S TIME SUPERMAN GOT BUSY!
FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS IS TO FEED THESE PEOPLE

Superman meets his creators? In this sequence, Superman is introduced to two Jewish boys (resembling Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster) who write and draw stories about an "angel" who protects the Jewish people.

Allon, Levitz decided to expand Colossal Boy's backstory by making the outsized hero a Jew—and in so doing, Colossal Boy's mother Marthe Allon, the president of Earth, became Jewish as well. "That's how you know it's science fiction!" laughs Paul Kupperberg. Levitz also used the series to comment on the issue of interfaith relationships. In "Guess What's Coming to Dinner" (issue #308, Feb 1984), Gim Allon introduces his alien wife Yera—an orange-skinned beauty from the planet Durla—to his parents (they'd secretly married a few issues earlier). After the young couple leaves, Marthe turns to her husband and quips, "Now, I wonder if I can find a way to convince them to bring their kids up Jewish?"—Levitz's way of saying that interfaith relationships will still be an issue in the Jewish community a thousand years from now.

If only it were true: Superman stops and frees a train full of people headed to a concentration camp.

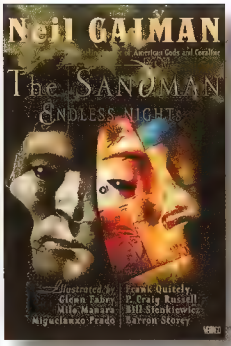
In the '90s, even Superman got into the Jewish act. Comics artist/writer Jon Bogdanove (*Man of Steel*, *Alpha Flight*) joined writer Louise Simonson (*Power Pack*) in crafting a three-part story in the Superman title *Man of Steel* (issues #80-82, 1998) in which the superhero becomes a Golem who defends the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto. Two of the ghetto children, Moishe and Baruch—reminiscent of Superman creators Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster—are mysteriously compelled to draw pictures (Baruch) and tell stories (Moishe) about an "angel" who "would save us"—an angel the Nazis fearfully refer to as a Golem and who looks like a certain Man of Steel. The story serves as a dynamic "what-if?"—what if Superman, a character not coincidentally created in 1938, had actually existed to combat Hitler? What if we'd truly had a Golem of our own?

Explicit Jewish references in mainstream comics are now the norm. In 1988, for example, the Jewish comics

And then they are back in the crumbling townhouse in the winter and the two girls are still holding each other tightly, as if they never want to let each other go.
AM I... AM I HERE? I WAS SUCH A LONG WAY INSIDE...
HELLO, DOGGIE.
You scared us. Don't do that
I HURTED.
"SOMEONE MUST HAVE TAKEN HER."
"COULDN'T SHE HAVE JUST WANDERED AWAY, MAAM?"
"NO! SHE...I'M SORRY SHE'S BEEN NEARLY CATATONIC FOR OVER A YEAR...YOU DON'T JUST GET UP AND WALK..."
I'M HOME.

A surrealistic page from Neil Gaiman's Sandman story "Going Inside," beautifully illustrated by Bill Sienkiewicz.

writer and British journalist Neil Gaiman created a new, third version of the DC character Sandman, who now took the form of the Lord of Dreams, ruling "The Land of Nod, in the East of (the biblical) Eden." Working Jewish themes into Sandman's storylines, Gaiman describes in one episode how a depressed Dream (short for Lord of Dreams) follows around his chipper sister Death (derived from the kabalistic notion that the Angel of Death is female) as she goes about her daily chore of collecting departed souls. At one point the macabre siblings visit Harry, an old Jewish man on his deathbed. Harry begs Death not to take his soul before he can recite the *Shema*; she grants his final wish. The *Shema* also figures into a *Fantastic Four* story by Jewish comics writer Karl Kessel (*Daredevil, Section Zero, Superboy*) and Stuart Immonen (*Adventures of Superman, Shockrockets*), who revealed two years ago that The Thing, aka Benjamin Jacob Grimm, is Jewish. In the story, Grimm returns to his childhood neighborhood on the Lower East Side, and mistakenly believing his old friend Mr. Sheckerberg has been fatally wounded by the villain Powderkeg, he recites the *Shema* on Sheckerberg's behalf. "I always thought Ben Grimm had to be Jewish anyway, because he was Jack's alter ego," Kupperberg says about The Thing's co-creator Jack Kirby. "But when these characters were first created, anti-Semitism was so prevalent, even in an industry



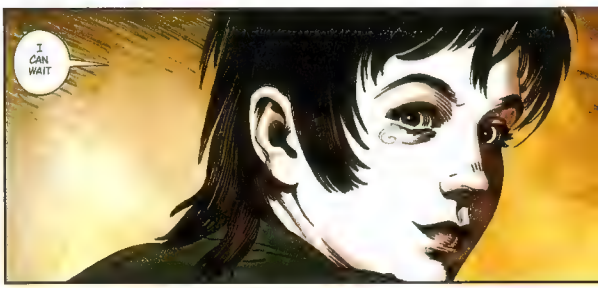
***The Sandman: Endless Nights* "crossed over" and was critically acclaimed by the mainstream press.**

run by Jews. We finally reached a time when you stopped hiding being a Jew." Trina Robbins, co-creator of the comics series *GoGirl!* (a title for young girls about the heroic exploits of Jewish teenager Lindsay Goldman, aka superhero GoGirl), agrees: "When you don't make a big deal about your character being Jewish, that's real equality."

The emergence of Jewish characters in comic books has mirrored American Jewry's own struggle for acceptance in a non-Jewish world. In the Golden Age, writers, cartoonists, and editors intent on creating simple children's entertainment hid subtle Jewish metaphors behind assimilated archetypes. In the Silver Age, Jewish comics creators courted a high school and college-level crowd with tales of both metaphoric mutant "outsiders" and underground comix with occasional Jewish narratives. Now, in the Bronze Age, Jewish comics creators have transformed an industry once marketed to young boys into a well-respected art form that graces the walls of prestigious museums; wins coveted literary prizes; and influences mainstream movies (George Lucas's *Star Wars* sextet and the Wachowski brothers' *Matrix* trilogy); best-selling books (Michael Chabon's *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* and Jonathan Lethem's recent *Fortress of Solitude*); and fine artists (Roy Lichtenstein and Phillip Guston's comic book iconography). Jews who pioneered this art form, often for little material reward, are superheroes in their own right, for they have created enduring icons of popular culture known around the globe—and, perhaps, beyond.

Arie Kaplan is a writer for MAD *magazine who has also written for* Entertainment Weekly, Time Out New York, *and the MTV series* Total Request Live.

© 2003, 2004 Arie Kaplan. Reprinted with the permission of *Reform Judaism* magazine,



One of Gaiman's most inspired creations, Sandman's kabalistic sister Death (art by P. Craig Russell).

Terra Incognita or Here There Be Wonders...

A Walking Tour of *Al Williamson: Hidden Lands* Personally Conducted by that Most Extraordinary Artist and Intrepid Explorer, Thomas Yeates, Esq.

Interview by Bill Baker

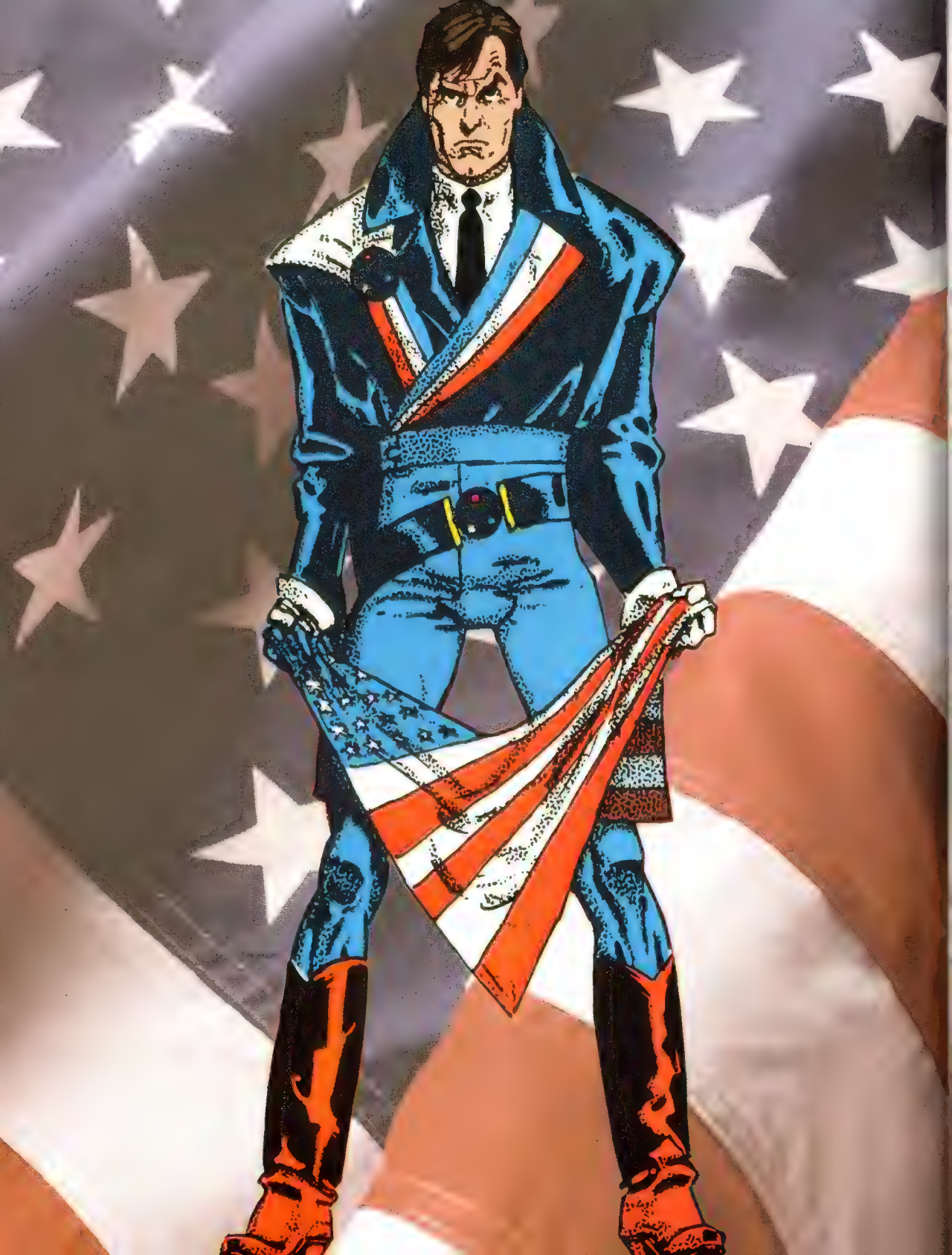
While many regular readers of this publication will surely recall Thomas Yeates' earlier forays into the lush cover of that four color jungle commonly referred to as "Comics" by the general public—an impressive body of work which spans a generation while it straddles genres, ranging as it does from shorts like the "Saga of the Dragonsword" which graced the back pages of DC's Warlord *in the seventies, to the mid-eighties Epic mini-series* Timespirites, *Malibu's fine but abortive attempt to re-launch the Tarzan comics franchise in the early nineties, and Image's reprinting of his and Don McGregor's excellent version of* Zorro*—perhaps just as many will recognize his moniker more for his current work assisting Cary Nord in visualizing the early adventures of that perennially popular barbarian, Conan, in the pages of Dark Horse's newest hit comic. However, unless they happen to be lucky enough to know the worthy in question very well, indeed, most readers will probably be unaware that Thomas Yeates is also an editor. The story of how he discovered these hidden talents within his own strange interiors begins with his quest for a chimera every fan of this medium will recognize…his own version of The Holy Grail. In this case, it revolved around a twenty-plus year search for those lost, forgotten and even criminally-neglected tales created by a true giant of the field, Al Williamson—someone whose work is largely celebrated and typically easily found…or so most folks thought.*

The story of Yeates' decades-long search for those nigh legendary "missing yearns" by Williamson, and how they've become the basis for Al Williamson: Hidden Lands, *makes for quite an epic itself.*

Bill Baker: How would you describe *Al Williamson: Hidden Lands*? Is it a reprint collection, an art book, a biography, or perhaps something else entirely?

Thomas Yeates: All three in one. It's basically Williamson in the fifties. Reprints of complete stories, so you can actually read them, which those of us who get a kick out of old comics will appreciate.

Continued on page 64



Bleeding Heart Patriot

by Will Murray

If I hadn't been a big fan of Captain America, Fighting American and similar Simon and Kirby characters, I might never have picked up that premier issue of First Comics' *American Flagg!* back in 1983.

Some combination of the superpatriotic name and the nominal hero's red, white and, um, blue-black leather uniform drew me. If I expected a regulation square-jawed All-American superhero, Reuben Flagg would have been a shock, not to mention a profound disappointment.

But I was already familiar with writer-artist Howard Chaykin's penchant for roguish, aggressively handsome anti-heroes like Marvel's Dominic Fortune, Cody Starbuck, and the short-lived Scorpion. So I had some idea of what I was getting into.

Or so I innocently thought....

Set in a mid-21st Century Depression, *American Flagg!* starred Chicago deputy Plexus Ranger working for the Plex, the Mars-based supercorporation/government that runs a dysfunctional Earth from the Red Planet. The U.S. government had relocated after a global meltdown in 1996 involving everything from a banking crisis to Black Plague, with a violent rise of worldwide Muslim fundamentalism thrown in. Asia and the Middle East are nuclear ruins.

"I feel the future is much like the present, only later, and more so," Chaykin once explained. "The U.S. population has been grossly reduced by various circumstances, not including nuclear war. The United States as a nation doesn't exist in any real functional way."

In fact, the U.S. has become a Third World-style backwater. Global power has shifted elsewhere.

"There are two empires that are in the process of growth: one is the Pan-African League, a very left-wing Prussian-looking black empire out of Africa, and the other is the Brazilian Union of Americas, which is most of South America run from Brazil. It is a very right-wing, very conservative empire which is the richer of the two."

Sounds promisingly generic at first, but his backstory is anything but genre-driven. A former porn star replaced by a hologram on his hit TV show, *Mark Thrust, Sexus Ranger,* Rueben Mikhail Flagg is not your average comics hero. For one thing,

DON'T MISS THE NEW ADVENTURES OF
MARK THRUST
SEXUS RANGER
starring "Reuben Flagg"
HOWARD CHAYKIN'S
AMERIC
FLAGG!
The provocative adventures of a fearless vice cop walking the mean streets of an unnamed, untamed and sexually transmitted disease riddled sector of a great urban metroplex.
Produced entirely by Tromplography
Brought to you each week by Consenso Research (you want it, you got it) A division of Am-plex-USA
THAT'S RIGHT, REUBEN FLAGG.
ONCE AGAIN, LIFE IMITATES ART...
NOW CAN I GO TO BED?
GOGANG 25:10
GOGANG 25:35
GOGANG 25:25
GOGANG 25:20

Reuben Flagg was the star of the hit show *Mark Thrust, Sexus Ranger* before he became a Plexus Ranger.

he was born in the year 2000.

Drafted into the Plexus Rangers and assigned to the Chicago Plexmall, Reuben partners up with a dim-bulb android named Luther Ironhand and Raul, a talking cat who's not played for cheap laughs. Flagg's initial girlfriend is zeppelin pilot Crystal Gayle Marakova, but Flagg hardly limited himself to one main squeeze, especially as the series progressed.

Chaykin once described the concept this way: "It's James Garner as Maverick running around in a future that looks like *Gunsmoke* with guys with guns and women with big tits." Back in '83, he elaborated, "When I announced the strip last summer, I called it a combination of *On the Beach* and *Li'l Abner,* a description which still functions to a certain extent. It's about politics, television and violence, among other things. Flagg represents the law, but the law ain't what it's cracked up to be. We haven't got a villain *per se,* but we'll be playing with politics urban warfare, gang wars, motorcycle crazies, illegal flying and just maybe—a zeppelin."

***American Flagg* #1 (First Comics, Oct. 1983).**

Flagg stands out for another reason, too. Like his creator, he's a Jew.

"I'm Jewish," Chaykin once quipped. "For those of you who read my stuff, it's a big secret. I like being Jewish. I get off on being Jewish. I use it as a manipulative tool."

Chaykin makes this clear in issue 2, when, at a wedding, the bride's sister introduced herself.

"I thought you were just *adorable* as Mark Thust," gushes Dagmar Liebowtiz. "Can I ask you just two questions?"

"Shoot," says Flagg.

"Are you really Jewish like Fanfax says?"

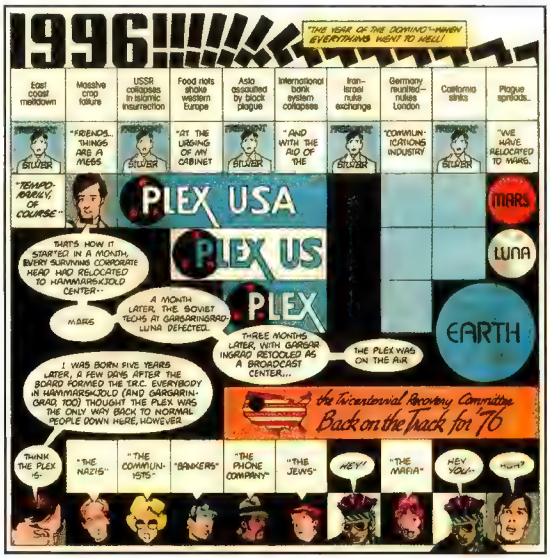
"Yes. Second question?"

"Do you want to go to the ladies room with me?"

(In case you're wondering, Flagg did.)

Jewish heroes were not completely new to comics. Will Eisner's Spirit, despite his civilian name of Dennis Colt, is sometimes cited as being the first semi-identifiable Jewish hero in comics, though Eisner himself denies this. Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's Benjamin J. Grimm, better known as the Fantastic Four's Thing, is a Jew. But neither of these classic characters was ever depicted as openly Jewish.

Reuben Flagg is another story. Never before in comics


1996!!!!!!
"THE YEAR OF THE DOMINO"—WHEN EVERYTHING WENT TO HELL!
East coast meltdown
Massive crop failure
USSR collapses in islamic insurrection
Food riots shake western Europe
Asia assaulted by black plague
International bank system collapses
Iran-Israel nuke exchange
Germany reunified—nukes London
California sinks
Plague spreads...
PLEX USA
PLEX US
PLEX
MARS
LUNA
EARTH
THAT'S HOW IT STARTED IN A MONTH. EVERY SURVIVING CORPORATE HEAD HAD RELOCATED TO HAWKWARRIORGOLD CENTER--
A MONTH LATER, THE SOVIET TECHS AT GARGARINGRAD-LUNA DEFECTED...
THREE MONTHS LATER, WITH GARGAR INGRAD RETOOLED AS A BROADCAST CENTER...
THE PLEX WAS ON THE AIR
I WAS BORN FIVE YEARS LATER, A FEW DAYS AFTER THE BOARD FORMED THE T.R.C. EVERYBODY IN HAWKWARRIORGOLD (AND GARGARINGRAD, TOO) THOUGHT THE PLEX WAS THE ONLY WAY BACK TO NORMAL PEOPLE DOWN HERE, HOWEVER...
the Tricentennial Recovery Committee
Back on the Track for '76
THINK THE PLEX IS--
"THE NAZIS"
"THE COMMUNISTS"
"BANKERS"
"THE PHONE COMPANY"
"THE JEWS"
HEY?
"THE MAFIA"
HEY, YOU...
HUH?

America's future...Plex USA.

Chaykin's creation Cody Starbuck from *Star Reach* #1 and 4 Group (Star Reach Productions, 1974).

history has an unambiguously Jewish hero starred in his own magazine. And strangely enough, no one has come along since to succeed him.

"Most of the people who work in comics, a lot of the people who write comics, are Jewish too," Chaylkin has said. "And these people are obviously incapable of recognizing themselves. They write these comic opera Jews whom I've never met—they write Jews the way gentiles write Jews. I can't do that. I won't do that."

OWW! HEY!? WHA--?
YOU NEVER TOLD ME THIS CRAP WAS PACKED WITH SUBLIMINALS!
DON'T GIVE ME THAT RIGHT HERE, D-E-A-T-H-- SEE?
I DON'T SEE A DAMN THING!
OTHER THAN A VID-SHOW I DON'T PARTICULARLY LIKE.
BUT--
DON'T "BUT" ME, FLAGG--
OR WASTE MY TIME. WOW. I THOUGHT TO HEARD EVERY POSSIBLE SECTION EIGHT STORY THERE WAS..
YOU'RE A PIP.
AND IF THERE ARE SUBLIMS--HOW COME ONLY YOU CAN SEE 'EM?
I DON'T KNOW...
WHAT SUBLIMINALS?
20

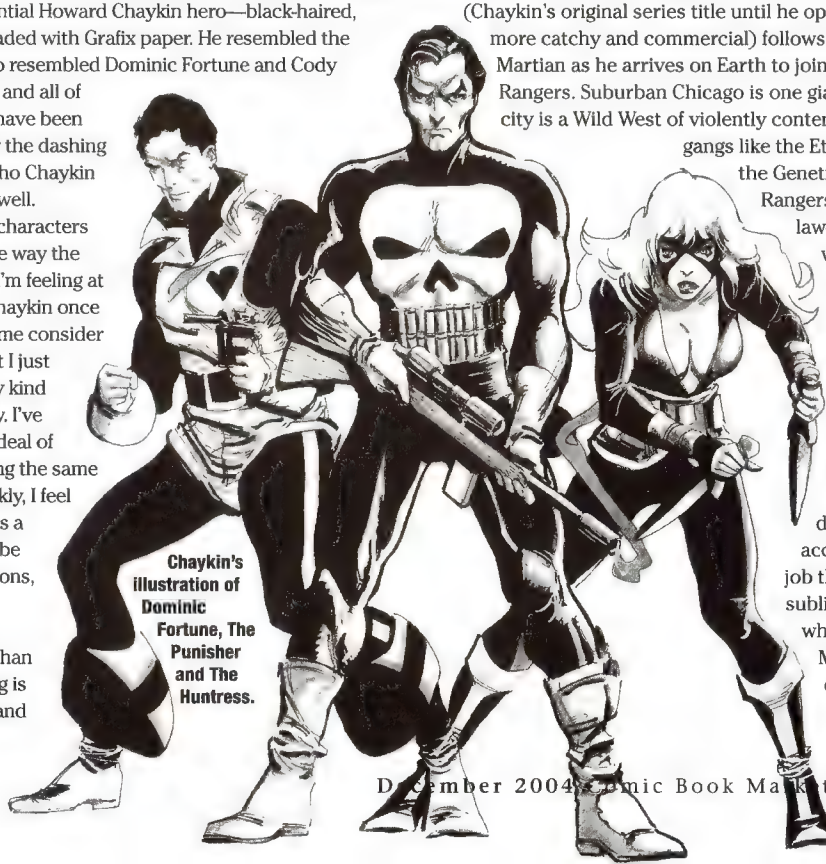
Flagg receives subliminal messages from the TV show *Bob Violence*.

Readers back in 1983, spotting Flagg's dark good looks on the cover of that first issue, thought they recognized in him the quintessential Howard Chaykin hero—black-haired, blue-eyed, shaded with Grafix paper. He resembled the Scorpion, who resembled Dominic Fortune and Cody Starbuck, any and all of whom might have been modeled after the dashing Blackhawk, who Chaykin later drew as well.

"All of my characters reflect in some way the persona that I'm feeling at that point," Chaykin once admitted. "Some consider it a failure, but I just consider it my kind of consistency. I've taken a great deal of flak for drawing the same hero, but frankly, I feel that drawing is a skill than can be taught to morons, and it's less relevant than having more than one idea. Flagg is highly moral and fairly bright. Many readers will see the feature's first couple of pages as another Dominic Fortune. He is *not* Dominic Fortune, who is a very lucky bubblehead."

The first *American Flagg!* storyline, "Hard Times" (Chaykin's original series title until he opted for something more catchy and commercial) follows the expatriate Martian as he arrives on Earth to join the paramilitary Rangers. Suburban Chicago is one giant mall. The inner city is a Wild West of violently contending motorcycle gangs like the Ethical Mutants and the Genetic Warlords. The Rangers' primary job is law-enforcement within the mall, and defending it from marauding "gogangs," who invariably attack fifteen minutes after their favorite TV show, *Bob Violence,* signs off.

For, no sooner does Flagg get acclimated to his new job than he discovers subliminal messages, which, thanks to his Martian metabolism only he can see, embedded in the



Chaykin's illustration of Dominic Fortune, The Punisher and The Huntress.

EVENING, FLAGG. LET'S SEE.. YOURS LEAD HANDED..
...SLOWLY REMOVE YOUR SIDEARM WITH YOUR RIGHT HAND--TWO FINGERS, NOW..
9:00 P.M.
SCHEISKOPF! WHAT'S THIS ALL--
FIELD AGENT SCHEISKOPF --ALEX INTERNAL AFFAIRS.
I CAME TO CHICAGO TO INVESTIGATE CYKE IRREGULARITY, AND FOUND MORE THAN I BARGAINED--
RIGHT. JUST A COVER
NOW-- GENTLY, KICK YOUR WEAPON TO ME...
THEN THE WHOLE SOVIET JEWELRY SALES MAN WAS--
THIS PIRATE STATION IS A BONUS. WHAT BROUGHT ME HERE--
SCHEISKOPF JOHN
PIA
WAS WHEN SOVIET-ONE--YOU, I GATHER--
PRE-EMPTED BOB VIOLENCE
21

Flagg encountered his first major adversary, the Plexus Ranger internal affairs field agent, John Scheiskopf, in issue #2, initiating a long and bitter struggle that culminated in issue #12, when Scheiskopf and neo-Nazi Titania Weis attempt to gas all of Chicago.

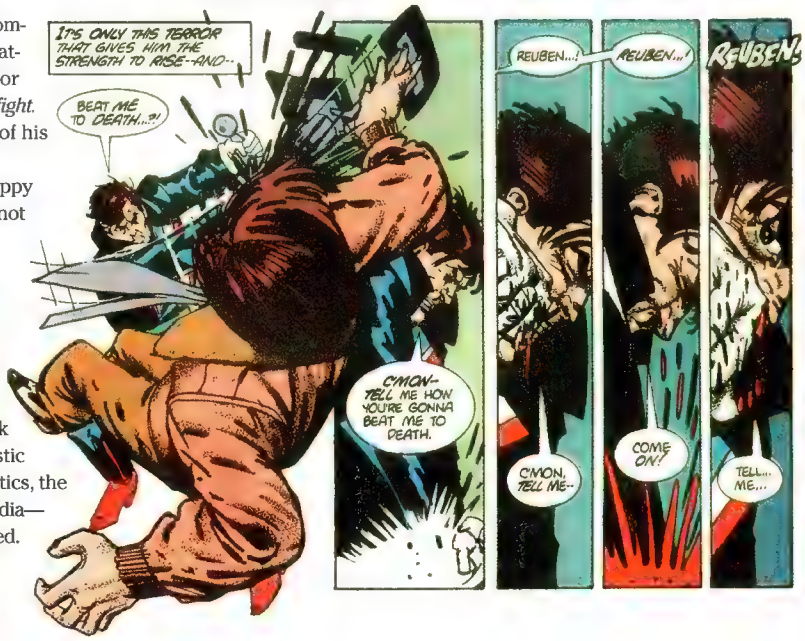
way to make this kind of olio work is to play it completely—okay, maybe not so completely, but mostly—straight."

Artistically, the book was as rooted in influences that go back to the 1950s. And it wasn't only TV Westerns and classic science fiction writers like Alfred Bester, another acknowledged inspiration. "I am an Alex Toth fanatic," noted Chaykin. "I worship the very ground Alex Toth walks on. And I'm a longstanding disciple of his style.... Nobody ever points out the huge influence that John Severin had on me. I feel that to a large extent *American Flagg!* is Alex Toth and Severin connected."

The series was developed in a succession of three- and four-part storylines. After resolving the war between the "gogangs" in "Hard Times," Flagg moved on to tackle the underground American Survivalist Labor Committee, one of hundreds of political groups, like the neo-Nazi Gotterdammercrats, the Judeo-Christian Moralists and the Militant Hadism, that populate post-Meltdown USA. He encountered his first major adversary, the Plexus Ranger internal affairs field agent, John Scheiskopf, in issue #2, initiating a long and bitter struggle that culminated in issue #12, when Scheiskopf and neo-Nazi Titania Weis attempt to gas all of Chicago.

Satire and send-up punctuated the proceedings. An unabashed liberal, Chaykin saw *American Flagg!* as his vehicle for personal self-expression. "As I've gotten older," he said in 1983, "I've become more of a gentleman. I don't think it's necessary to be a big mouth in public. With American Flagg, it's time for me to spit into the wind with the

Chaykin's series emphasized a mature theme with a good dose of cinematic violence.

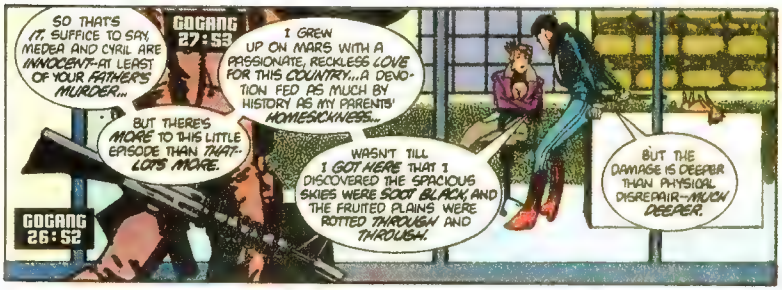


show. Behind the discovery exists an uncomfortable truth: an unknown group is motivating the gogangs, then filming the carnage for broadcast as a reality TV show called *Firefight.*

Howard Chaykin was way, way ahead of his time.

"I take no credit for prescience—it's a happy accident that I got so much right—but let's not forget how much I got wrong," he recently reflected. "On the other hand, I *do* cringe at reality TV—I was just kidding!—and look at what it's become, for God's sake!"

It's a grim depiction of life 25 years after the nuclear-biological-economic-fundamentalist meltdown of 1996, but Chaykin related it in a ribald tongue-in-cheek tone counterbalancing his hyper-retro-realistic art style. "Everything about *Flagg!*—the politics, the plays on words, the satirical take on the media—was of a piece," Chaykin recently commented. "I felt then, as I still do today, that the only


SO THAT'S IT. SUFFICE TO SAY, MEDEA AND CYRIL ARE INNOCENT--AT LEAST OF YOUR FATHER'S MURDER...
GOGANG 27:53
I GREW UP ON MARS WITH A PASSIONATE, RECKLESS LOVE FOR THIS COUNTRY...A DEVOTION FED AS MUCH BY HISTORY AS MY PARENTS' HOMESICKNESS...
BUT THERE'S MORE TO THIS LITTLE EPISODE THAN THAT--LOTS MORE.
WASN'T TILL I GOT HERE THAT I DISCOVERED THE SPACIOUS SKIES WERE SOOT BLACK, AND THE FRUITED PLAINS WERE ROTTED THROUGH AND THROUGH.
BUT THE DAMAGE IS DEEPER THAN PHYSICAL DISREPAIR--MUCH DEEPER.
GOGANG 26:52

Reuben Flagg discusses his origins in *American Flagg* #3.

idea that liberals are patriotic, too. It's an American comic book about my attitudes toward America, and it's a hell of an opportunity to play around."

Underlying the distopic dysfunctionalism, the cheap sex and cheaper drugs like Accellomine and Somnambutol, *American Flagg!* was the story of an expatriate patriot who came to Earth to see the America his Martian parents believed in, only to discover the Land of the Free had collapsed into a bed of cold ashes. "I grew up on Mars with a passionate, reckless love for this country," Reuben declaims in issue #3. "A devotion fed as much by history as my parents' homesickness...wasn't till I got here that I discovered the spacious skies were soot black, and the fruited plains were rotted through and through.

Cover and splash page for *American Flagg* #4 (First Comics, Jan 1984).

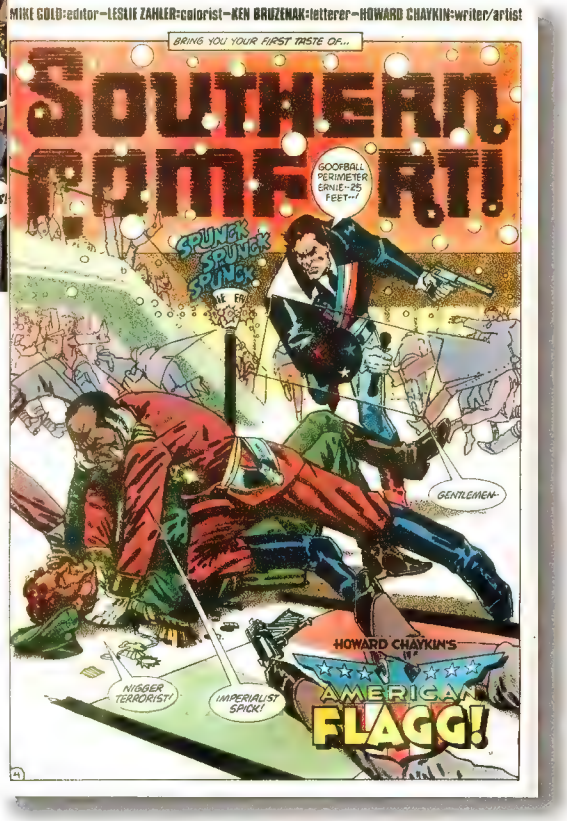
"But the damage is deeper than physical disrepair—much deeper. The American spirit—the honest, openhanded driving force of solidarity—has been castrated. Betrayed by the banks...by big business...by slimy fat cats who use patriotism like a tart uses cheap perfume...betrayed by the Plex."

Flagg vows to turn things around...eventually. Gaining control of a pirate video broadcasting station, making alliances with an illegal basketball team called the Skokie Skullcrushers, and doing his duty as a Ranger, Flagg starts working for change. He soon emerges as a 21st century revolutionary, founding the Video Rangers after being kicked out of his job, but returning to it later after realizing that all true revolutions must be ignited from within.

Very quickly, Reuben Flagg metamorphoses from a suspenders-wearing off-world bumpkin into a true mensch. Whether Chaykin was riffing on L'il Abner hitting the big city, or recasting the saga of European Jews coming to America in futuristic terms, is open to interpretation. Either way, it's a timeless storyline, and he made it relevant in an exciting new way.

"Reuben is a moral, some might say puritanical man, interested in doing the right thing by the standards of those around him," Chaykin said on the eve of *American Flagg!'s* debut. "Reuben is not stupid. He is a very sensitive man who will ultimately know what's best for himself and for everybody else, too. I'm tying to do a book where the good guys and the bad guys are nearly interchangeable. Because that really is the way it is."

Taking a quick-cut MTV-style cinematic approach, Chaykin told his tales through a bewildering kaleidoscope of characters who came and went, living, loving and dying, sometimes switching sides and identities at the drop of a gun. Readers found it rich in subtext, and the multi-layer storytelling lent itself to repeated re-readings, not just simply for pleasure, but because obscure meanings and hidden surprises surfaced that way. *American Flagg!* may have been the first comic book



REUBEN FLAGG!!
Flagg was born at Hammarskjold Center, Mars, in the year 2000 – five years after natural, technological and political disasters made it the home of every surviving corporate chief and the capital of Humanity.
Flagg is a college dropout, a former pop-singer and standup comic, known worldwide as the video star "Mark Thrust, Sexus Ranger" (a vice officer "walking the mean streets of an unnamed, untamed and sexually-transmitted-disease-riddled sector of a great urban metroplex").
Replaced by "tromplography" – computer-generated images that simulate acting – Flagg chose to join the Plexus Rangers on Earth – apparently inspired by his parents' devotion to the U.S.A.
Flagg has at least one unusual talent: Thanks to his Martian diet and metabolism, he can see the subliminal messages the ASLC has implanted in video programming, even though they're invisible to almost everyone else.
When working undercover, Flagg often adopts the identity of Pete Zarustika (sometimes "Zarustica.")

A.S.L.C.
American Survivalist Labor Committee
AMERICAN FLAGG!
DOSSIER PART I
BY HOWARD CHAYKIN & CHARLES MEYERSON
A few days before the banks collapsed along with the rest of society in 1996, rumor has it almost two million Americans went underground.
According to research prepared by the Witnesses, ASLC was a reactionary wing of the Democratic Party: Pro-nuclear, anti-Semitic, anti-Italian, anti-British.
In 2031, the ASLC surfaced with a plan to discredit Reuben Flagg, gas Chicago and make it a home for the more than one million ASLC'ers living in caves and shacks outside the city.
ASLC has forged an alliance with the above-ground neo-Nazi political organization known as the Gotterdammercrats. The ASLC's leader is a man referred to only as Decker, based in Peoria. Whether he participated in a mass suicide among members in Peoria after the defeat in Chicago remains to be seen.

to come with the print equivalent of DVD-era "Easter eggs."

Even the *Mark Thrust* TV show, wherein Flagg played a Plex vice cop, anticipated the '80s hit *Miami Vice* by more than a year.

Chaykin single-handedly produced *American Flagg!* for the series' first year, but the relentless monthly schedule soon took its toll. For three issues, he delegated the art chores, principally to James Sherman and Pat Broderick. Readers howled in protest.

When he returned, Chaykin wrote shorter, less complicated tales, while guest creators filled the back of the book with spin-off sub-series. One sequence took him to communist-controlled Canada—in a town called the Democratic Peoples' Prairie—for what was essentially a Wild West saga. Then it was back to Chicago for a bitterly contested Mayoral election in which Raul the cat makes a surprise showing.

GOGANGS!!
GOGANG 03:14
Some things never change: Gogangs are motorcycle gangs - anarchist, terrorist-type motorcycle gangs, but not much different from the 1984-style version. Chicago has two gogangs: The Genetic Warlords, co-founded by C.K. Blitz, and the Ethical Mutants.
There were five, but rumor has it the Mutants ate the other three.
Until Flagg arrived, the gogangs went crazy on Saturday nights, pumped up by the subliminal messages of violence the ASLC was inserting in their favorite TV show, Bob Violence.
The Warlords' leader, Cyril Farid-Khan, is Medea Blitz' old boyfriend. He was a suspect in the murder of Chief Ranger Hilton Krieger, until Flagg cleared him.
GOGANG 00:19
GOGANG 00:17
GOGANG 00:00
GOGANG 00:13
GOGANG 00:32
GOGANG 00:05

Readers noticed Chaykin starting to tie up loose plot threads that normally should have been good for several years worth of stories. It was a harbinger of his future intentions.

American Flagg!'s second year climaxed with a *Casablanca*-inspired four-parter called "Mad Dogs and Englishmen." In London to help promote *Mark Thrust*, which is being broadcast to help engineer a truce between England and Ireland, Flagg is stunned to discover his high school flame, Grace De Wolfe, singing in a nightclub. He's also startled to discover she's still wearing his Grandpa Moishe's mezuzah around her neck. Flagg gave it to her back in the day. Now he wants it back. But Grace wants something important from Flagg in return.

There's more to Grace De Wolfe than an opportunity for Flagg to fall in love and not just into bed. Before the storyline concludes, Flagg has the mezuzah back—along with an uncharacteristic ache in his heart. It was a nice, romantic resolution for a series that had been so steeped in sex and violence.

The next four issues were a tremendous letdown, with Chaykin scripting over the work of *E-Man* 's Joe Staton. After issue #30, Chaykin walked away from the series entirely to pursue other opportunities.

Shorn of his individual vision, *American Flagg!* drifted aimlessly off into unintended self-parody while its disaffected readers began peeling away like a week-old sunburn. First Comics put Steve Grant on the scripts, while artist Mark Badger did the best he could with a losing proposition. It was as if someone were trying to continue *Miami Vice* using only paper and crayons. Creative teams came and went. Nothing worked. Nothing could work. Even Chaykin stopped paying his own creation any attention.

"I have to say I'm pretty unfamiliar with what happened in the book after I left—and I gather from those in the know that in this particular case, ignorance might be bliss," he admitted recently.

A year after his departure, Chaykin returned to do issue #1 of *American Flagg! Special,* but it was only a setup for his new *Time2* project, which was laid in an alternate temporal reality. While Reuben starred in the special, he spent most of the story out of uniform. But for the presence of Raul the cat, he might have been Dominic Fortune caught up in a bizarre fantasy mixing seamy crime with Jewish mysticism.

The post-Chaykin *Flagg!* ground to a halt with issue #46. With the series slumping, First prevailed upon the series' creator to return for a final story designed to wrap up with the 50th issue. Chaykin plotted a four-part story arc scripted by Mindy Newell. And while Grace De Wolfe returned, this was no bittersweet sequel to "Mad Dogs and Englishmen."

"It'll end the first 50 issues on something of an up note," Chaykin joked at the time, "and hopefully something of a degenerate and perverse note, because my feeling is that there isn't enough degenerate perversity in comics on a positive note. I am on record as saying that the characters that I create, write and draw are not and have never been, Boy Scouts, and I'm not interested in Boy Scouts."

Chaykin also made it clear that he was walking away from his creation, probably forever. "I have other things to deal with," he said in 1987. "I have limited attention. I have a very complex number of things I attend to on a daily basis, and thinking about what happens to *American Flagg!*, a comic book that I created four years ago, is not on my list of high priorities. I hope it goes on. I hope it succeeds. I hope it makes a lot of money, [but] it isn't anywhere near the surface of my consciousness."

Yet all was not lost. Hollywood interest in the character pursuaded Chaykin to reactivate Reuben in 1988. First re-launched the title as *Howard Chaykin's American Flagg!* "It has been a while since I really looked at the book and thought about the material," Chaykin admitted at the time. "I spent time figuring out what it would take to revive *Flagg!* and bring it back to some semblance of what it deserved, and also come up with a solid structural basis." Moving his hero to 21st century Russia (Chaykin correctly foresaw the breakup of the Soviet Union, although his version collapsed from an Islamic uprising) kicked off a bold new direction for Reuben Flagg. In order to pick up the tangled skeins of his own creation, Chaykin decided that continuity be damned.

Flagg's final climactic fight with Scheiskopf in *American Flagg* #12 (First Comics, Sept 1984).

"We're not so much ignoring the issues that followed my original tenure as *disregarding* them—there is a semantic difference. Continuity means as much to me as ice hockey, and that ain't much! I'm willing to make adjustments, rather than deal with unnecessary baggage."

Chaykin otherwise claimed his Ranger hadn't changed in the intervening years. "He's still basically moral guy who can be seduced by sex or power—so, he's like anybody else. I've said more than once that I don't do Boy Scout characters because I can't write somebody who's morally superior to me, and it's difficult to write a lead who is morally *inferior* to me."

But the audience for *American Flagg!* had already moved on to other things. The revival lasted only a year. Had Chaykin himself drawn the new incarnation, things might have been different. But he chose only to plot and do page breakdowns. Mindy Newell resumed scripting, while Mike Vosburg, Richard Ory and Tony Van de Walle, executed the finished pages, with Chaykin pitching in on the finishes. It wasn't enough to re-motivate Flagg fans.

For more than fifteen years, *American Flagg!* has languished in the Valhalla of Missing and Much-Missed Heroes. Recently, Dynamic Forces has begun collecting the series in permanent editions. While this can't be called a revival by any means, Howard Chaykin was persuaded to do a new story for the first hardcover edition.

As he put it, "The new *Flagg!* story is a piece designed to showcase the series' major characters in a set piece that fits right into the original run, with all the elements that made *Flagg!* special—nasty dialogue, innuendo, stupid robots, smart cats and television commercials for things we'll never need."

A true revival appears to be a dim undestined dream, however. "I don't think I could create a project like *American Flagg!* today," Chaykin has said. "To a profound extent, *Flagg!* was a kitchen sink book—encompassing ideas and concepts I'd been playing around with for several years—mostly notions and technical approaches I thought might be too radical for the mainstream houses at DC and Marvel."

That's an ironic assessment in light of what Chaykin said about the concept back at the beginning: "I don't think I could have promoted *American Flagg!* as a package at Marvel or DC, because it's not about those kinds of things Marvel and DC are currently interested in producing. I'm not very comfortable with the idea of superheroes. It's time to latch onto the fact that our audience is staying with us, and getting older, too—so let's get older with them."

But then, back in 1983, Howard Chaykin was 32—the same age as Reuben Flagg. "I think as we get older," he then observed, "those of us who experience some sort of adult-

hood do recognize the playful silliness of costumed superheroes. We find out, really, that Dr. Wertham was right. Americans tend to think that comics heroes are all red, yellow and blue, really bright guys who have minimally schmucky problems, who fly around with capes and punch each other out. Comics don't all have to be superhero comics."

Chaykin was trying to appeal to comics fans who'd grown up. He was also trying to make a personal statement impossible to do through traditional comics themes. "I want to do a comic book that will sell to a market, without pandering to that market," he reflected back in '83. "I don' know if that's possible. I'm trepidacious because I'm not doing cute teenage superheroes. Then again, I'm not a cute teenage superhero. It's my chance to do a book that is finally enabling me to say something important about life. I never felt there was anything worth saying, particularly in comics, except about comics. On the other hand, this gives me an opportunity to say something about television and about advertising and about drugs."

Twenty years after his debut, *American Flagg!* remains far, far ahead of the standard superhero fare most mainstream comics publishers continue to offer. As much as comic books have evolved since, they have remained rooted in a perpetual 1960s-70s sensibility that fosters a kind of surface evolution, but no fundamental thematic or creative growth.

Nor has another successful Jewish superhero emerged since. Back in 1993, Chaykin tried again with *Midnight Men,* but the Marvel miniseries ended after only four issues. It starred a jewel thief named Barnett Pasternack, who takes on the mantle of his dead father's vigilante heritage after discovering that generations of his ancestors followed in the same Zorro-like footsteps going back to Colonial days. The concept suggested a multi-generational Jewish Phantom.

Chaykin addressed this problem in his typically direct manner: "I have a real hard time with the way ethnics are portrayed in comics. They are portrayed in such broad terms that even the most liberal among us constantly ends up playing with the clichés. So what I try to do is find other aspects of the cliché to play with. When I write Jewish characters, black characters or women characters, I try to find some aspect of my own experience."

For the root cause, Chaykin cited the Depression-era origins of the comic books industry, back when assimilating into the American mainstream, not individual expression, was the dominant social paradigm. "There aren't enough ethnic characters in comics, because, face it, all these Jewish guys, who are old enough to be my father or grandfather, created all these WASP characters with names like *Jay* and *Bruce* and *Kent*, and ultimately their children named their children after that. So I know all these guys named Bart Weinstein and things like that. Christ, in my time "Howard" used to be a profoundly Germanic name; Jewish boys didn't have names like Howard. Now Howard is a classically Jewish name."

The sad truth is that *American Flagg!* was a product of a special time—a brief flowering of independent comics which carved out a successful niche back in the '80s, a welcome antidote to *Spider-Man* and *X-Men.* These days, even those formerly super-successful titles don't sell the way they did twenty years ago. And the surviving independents sell even less, forcing creators to be ever more mainstream just to survive.

"I've never been associated with characters who leap around in sort of altruistic ways," Chaykin admitted. "I tend to do characters who have very rock-bound, solid justifications for their behavior. My characters work for money. That's what we all work for. I don't trust altruism, because I think it's the first step toward a benign dictatorship, or benevolent despotism...."

Yet he also confessed, "Flagg was a bit of a bleeding heart." Perhaps here the creator finally outgrew his creation.

Two decades ago, Howard Chaykin indicted modern comics reality, and his words still ring true today: "The more successful talents in the business reflect, support and share the audience's sensibilities, not the least of which is that evil is an external force—the last time *that* was taken seriously was Nazi Germany, and to them, the Jews were the evil external force. I find that sort of behavior morally offensive, but it's precisely the ethic of most contemporary action/adventure comics."

Which, in the final analysis, may be why it will be a long, long time before comics audiences see another stereotype-defying bleeding-heart patriot like Reuben Flagg!

ROBOT DAWN

by Will Murray

It's not often that you get to solve two longstanding Marvel mysteries with one insight, but I think I may have done it.

First, the two mysteries:

1) Why did early Silver Age Marvel super-hero Iron Man go through such a strange genesis? Jack Kirby clearly designed him, but Don Heck drew his origin, slightly redesigning his original gray armor for that origin story.

2) Why did colorist Stan Goldberg repeat the mistake he made on the Hulk—coloring him an unappealing and difficult to reproduce gray—with Iron Man?

As it turns out, those two questions may be linked in more ways than the common thread of Iron Man.

First, to set the stage, let's recap some history:

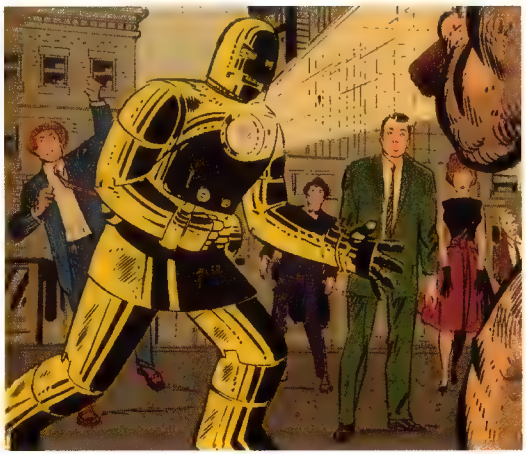
We all know that the flagship Marvel comic, *The Fantastic Four,* was started when Martin Goodman got wind of how well DC's *Justice League of America* was selling, and instructed his editor to, well, ape it.

Stan Lee and Jack Kirby produced *The Fantastic Four.* It sold. They next went on to launch *The Incredible Hulk,* which didn't. During the genesis of the Hulk, Lee and colorist Goldberg had a disagreement on how to color the Hulk. Goldberg thought green best fit the character. Lee disagreed. A moody gray is what he wanted and since Lee was Goldberg's boss, that's what he got.

When *Hulk* #1 came back from the printer, Lee saw what Goldberg tried to warn him against. While the Hulk did look appropriately moody and malevolent on that now-classic cover, inside, the gray reproduced messy and muddy.

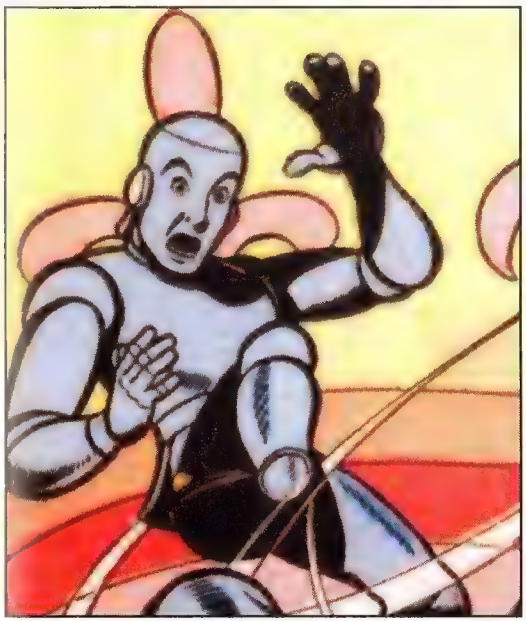
[continued on page 58]

Tales of Suspense #39 (Mar 1963). Below, detail from the second appearance, #40 (Apr 1963).



LABORATORY...
THOSE STAINS ARE FROM PEANUT OIL... AND THERE ARE PARTICLES OF SALT ON THE GLOVE!
ANOTHER LEAD TO THE SPINNER'S IDENTITY! WE NOT ONLY KNOW HE WAS IN JOLIET PRISON-- BUT THAT HE MUST BE FOND OF SALTED PEANUTS!

Clockwise: Marvel's Metallo, **Tales of Suspense** #16 (Apr 1961); DC's no-black purplish-gray Batman (**Batman** #129 (Feb 1960); original gray Hulk in #1 (May 1962); National's Golden Age Robotman.

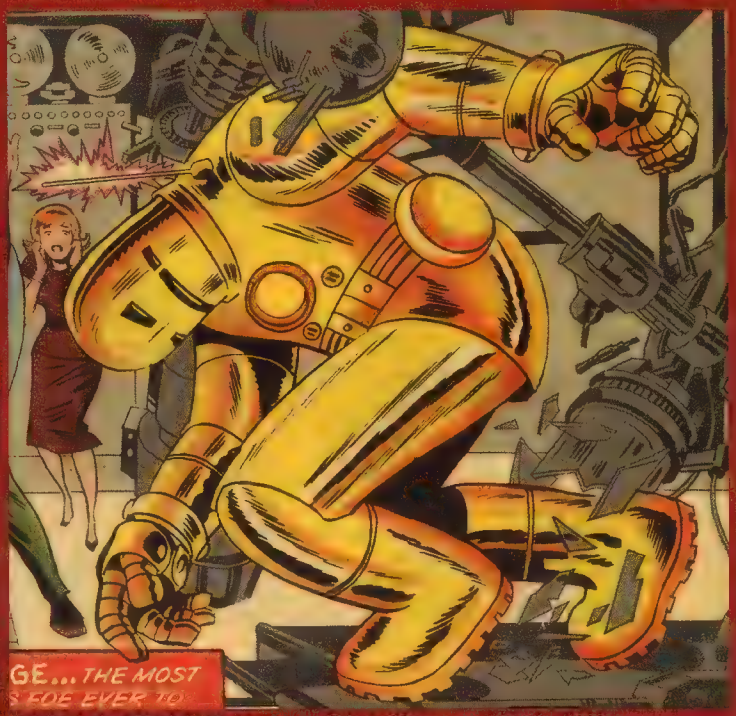


ROBOT DAWN:

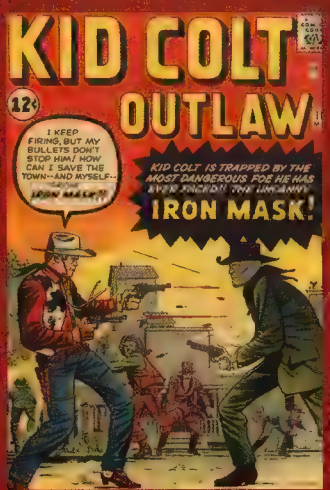
DC's Silver Age Metal Men: Gold, Iron and Lead.

DC's Robotman.

METAL IN THE SILVER AGE



Detail only, Iron Man's third appearance, **Tales of Suspense** #41 (May 1963) and armor change in #48 (Dec 1963).


KID COLT OUTLAW
12¢
I KEEP FIRING, BUT MY BULLETS DON'T STOP HIM! HOW CAN I SAVE THE TOWN--AND MYSELF--FROM THE IRON MASK?!
KID COLT IS TRAPPED BY THE MOST DANGEROUS FOE HE HAS EVER FACED! THE UNKNOWN
IRON MASK!

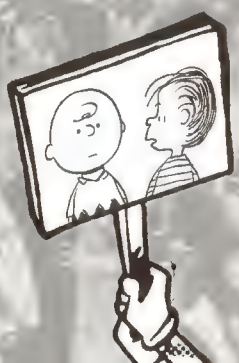
Iron Mask in **Kid Colt Outlaw** #110 (May 1963).

HOT!

After selling all of the EC artwork for the "New Trend" comic books (1950-1955) and the "New Direction" comics (1955-1960), and some of the "Pre-Trend" comics (pre-1950), RUSS COCHRAN'S COMIC ART AUCTION will now start selling the remainder of the "Pre-Trend" originals... titles like Picture Stories, Fat & Slat, Dandy, Tiny Tot, Moon Girl, Blackstone, etc., etc. Subscribe now, don't miss out!

Russ Cochran has been auctioning original comic art since 1973. RUSS COCHRAN'S COMIC ART AUCTION has offered the very best in comic strip art as well as comic book art.

For buying and selling information contact Russ Cochran at 1-800-EC Crypt.



Robot Dawn

[continued from page 54]

"The Hulk was different shades of gray, even green in one panel," Goldberg recalled.

Lee ordered the grim gray giant re-colored green for the next issue. No explanation for this abrupt change was ever offered readers during the brief original run of the magazine. (Later, it was suggested that successive doses of Gamma radiation wrought the change—but no further exposures were recorded between *Hulk* #1 and #3.)

You have to wonder what Lee was thinking. He seemed to like the color gray. His pre-hero monster covers were splashed with it. But inside, his monsters were either an orange-brown or a lime green. Occasionally, a monster would show up gray on a cover, but inside he was either green or brown—and rarely some odd color like red or yellow. The original Hulk, an alien named Xemu, had been gray on his original cover appearances, but was colored orange inside. Clearly, Lee and Goldberg had been down this path before.

Possibly Lee saw a chance to exploit his technological superiority to DC. Back in those days, Marvel employed cheaper production methods than DC, but they were willing to put more money into coloring. Marvel commanded a more extensive color palette, possessing more tones of monster-green, as well as a true flesh tone and an actual gray. DC lacked finer yellow screens, specifically a 25% and 50% yellow dot. Thus, their flesh tone was really pink, and the DC gray was a compromise created from 25% blue and 25% red. The result was a dull purplish-gray, as any reader of the early '60s Batman will recall. Marvel was able to emulate true gray by mixing a 25% yellow with the 25% blue and red combination DC employed. Reportedly, Neal Adams prevailed on DC to go for true gray when he started drawing Batman in the late '60s. Ironically, around the same time, Jim Steranko convinced Stan Lee that his enthusiasm for gray tones was misplaced.

But readers don't buy comics based on a heightened color sense. They buy them because characters appeal to them. Or don't. While *The Incredible Hulk* was no sales success, Lee and Kirby started issuing forth a parade of super-heroes, like Spider-Man and Thor, who still operate today.

Rumor has it that publisher Martin Goodman pushed for Ant Man because he was privy to sales figures on DC's revived Atom in *Showcase.* It was one of DC's hottest sellers of 1961. By the time

The New Shape of Comic Character Collecting.

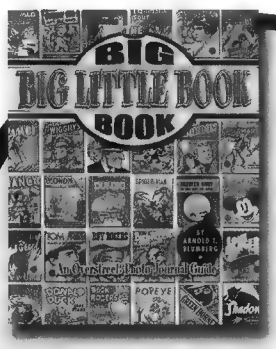
What's missing from your Spider-Man or Disney or Batman collection?

What's one of the hottest collectibles in the world of comic characters?

THE BIG BIG LITTLE BOOK BOOK will help you collect the LITTLE books that will complete your BIG collection.

THE SHAPE OF COMIC CHARACTER COLLECTING TO COME!

A FULL COLOR PHOTO-JOURNAL GUIDE . . . $19.95 +s&h
ON SALE IN DECEMBER FROM GEMSTONE PUBLISHING!



COMIC SHOP LOCATOR SERVICE
COMICS
888-COMIC-BOOK
csls.diamondcomics.com

TO ORDER CALL HEATHER AT 888-375-9800 EXT. 249.
ORDER YOUR COPIES NOW!

All characters TM and © respective copyright holders. All rights reserved.

Goodman got wind of this, he hoped to make Ant Man the hottest comics seller of 1962. Things didn't work out that way. But for a while, there was some talk of giving Ant Man his own book, and dumping the faltering Hulk into *Tales to Astonish.*

The other characters started popping up in the remaining pre-hero monster books pretty fast. The Human Torch was a natural. He had long been a top Marvel seller, and the new version in the *FF* could be expected do the same. It did—as long as Jack Kirby drew it. Kirby brought in the prototypal Spider-Man from his files, but Steve Ditko was the one who truly created it. Thor seems to have been another idea kicking around in Kirby's fertile brain—although Lee recalled the idea was to do Superman one better by producing a sort of Supergod. One imagines Thor was pulled, if not out of a file, from Kirby's vivid imagination once Lee asked him, "What else have you got, Jack?"

I suspect the true impetus to revive the Sub-Mariner in *FF* #4 stemmed from Aquaman's 1961 resurfacing as a *Showcase* series and the awarding of his own magazine at the close of the year. After all, back in the Golden Age of comics, Aquaman was the most blatant and successful Sub-Mariner imitation published.

Iron Man was different. For one thing, he was the last of that first wave of 1961-62 super-heroes to appear. For another, he came in late, debuting in *Tales of Suspense* #39 (Mar 1963), the same cover date that Spider-Man was given his own title after his one-shot appearance in *Amazing Fantasy* #15. Both were released in December 1962.

Rumor has it the Kirby cover was the original concept sketch and that it had been floating around the Marvel offices for a while. Supposedly, Kirby had been lobbying for Iron Man to get his own title from the start, but Goodman didn't want to kill a decent-selling book to take a chance on an untried concept. Except that it wasn't as untried as all that.

The lineage of most early Marvel characters is easy to trace. FF from JLA. Ant Man from the Atom. Sub-Mariner via Aquaman. Could anything DC was concurrently producing have inspired Iron Man?

Well, yes. For one of DC's best-selling ventures of 1962 was Metal Men, appearing in an unprecedented four-issue run of *Showcase,* immediately following the Atom's tryout stint. Metal Men was said to have outsold Superman that year, percentage-wise.

It's not difficult to imagine Goodman saying to Lee, who then told Kirby, "We need a metallic robot-type hero. But he can't be an actual robot. That would be too close to Metal Men. Jack, what can you come up with?"

And Kirby conjured up a concept sketch for Iron Man. Probably on the spot. Perhaps he looked too clunky to carry a book of his own. Maybe he was too clunky, period. Possibly Goodman had second thoughts. He used to say that the three cover elements that depressed sales were rockets, ray guns and robots. And Iron Man sure looked like a robot to the casual eye.

Possibly because Kirby was too busy launching *Sgt. Fury and His Howling Commandos,* Don Heck drew that first Iron Man. Whatever the case, Heck made cosmetic changes, giving the open-slit eye and mouth apertures of Anthony Stark's helmet a skull-like cast and adding a chin to complete the death's-head countenance. He also trimmed back Iron Man's metallic kilt into plain super-hero-style metal trunks.

Reportedly Martin Goodman wasn't terribly impressed with Heck's origin tale. Hence, Kirby was drafted to draw the second story, or perhaps it was the third. It's entirely possible that the third tale, Kirby's "The Stronghold of Dr. Strange," was actually the second story completed and publication was pushed back to accommodate a series-saving emergency story, "Iron Man versus Gargantus," in which, realizing that Iron Man looks too forbidding, Tony Stark repaints his drab armor a more heroic hue.

You can see the differences between the Heck and Kirby designs in that third story. It's all Kirby. No death's-head

FRANK MILLER. ROBERT RODRIGUEZ.
SIN CITY.

OVERSTREET'S COMIC PRICE REVIEW #19

Frank Miller's Sin City has revolutionized crime comics – and comics in general – since its debut, and now it's headed for the silver screen courtesy of Miller, director Robert Rodriguez and an all-star cast. Take a look at the groundbreaking work in this special issue of *Overstreet's Comic Price Review*. Each issue includes Top Ten Lists from the Golden Age, Silver Age, Bronze Age, Copper Age, plus Ten To Watch, Market Reports, and Overstreet pricing in the high-grade 9.4-10.0 categories!

COMIC SHOP LOCATOR SERVICE
888-COMIC-BOOK
csls.diamondcomics.com

OCPR #19
$6.25

GEMSTONE PUBLISHING

IN THE COMICS SECTION OF PREVIEWS UNDER GEMSTONE PUBLISHING!

helmet, and the metallic kilt is in place. Even with Heck inking the Gargantus tale, Iron Man's armor design wavers from page to page.

In any case, when it came down to coloring that origin of Iron Man, Lee and Goldberg repeated the error they had made only a year before with the Hulk. They colored him gray. It didn't work. Goldberg has said that he selected it because that was the most appropriate hue for iron. As he told *Alter-Ego,* "Iron Man was gray in his first story because it made more sense. The color of iron is gray."

Well, that's not exactly true. Iron is more blue-black. In fact, a similar pre-hero Marvel villain named Metallo had been colored cobalt blue by Goldberg to striking effect back in *Tales of Suspense* #16, just two years before. And whenever he colored robotic characters, the same dark blue tint was used.

Why didn't Lee and Goldberg do the obvious? Why not color Iron Man a nice heroic blue? Was it because earlier in the year, they had introduced in *The Fantastic Four* an updating of the classic Man in the Iron Mask—namely Dr. Doom—and his armor was a flat gray? Could be. But Dr. Doom was a villain. And a year later, a similar villain introduced in *Kid Colt, Outlaw* started off gray, but Iron Mask was subsequently colored a more metallic blue. Lee and Goldberg had a clear choice, and they chose to repeat the Hulk fiasco. There had to be a compelling reason not to use blue.

Maybe you can see where I'm going with this....

The short answer is that they couldn't.

The long answer was that if they did, DC might sue them. For over in *Metal Men,* in the process of getting their own magazine (cover-dated Apr-May 1963) each metal-based robot of that indestructible band had his own distinctive hue. Mercury was red. Tin a pale blue. Platinum, silvery. Iron's just happened to be a dark blue. To color Iron Man the identical color was to almost certainly invite a cease-and-desist letter from DC's law firm. And since DC's distributor was also Marvel's distributor that just wouldn't do.

So, Lee and Golberg compromised. The next best color was gray, the color of Metal Men's Lead. Only Marvel's gray was a true battleship gray. The robotic Lead was more purplish-gray. Of course, battleship gray didn't really work for Iron Man.

Which is why in that emergency second story, there's a sequence where the newly-emergent Iron Man scares the pants off several bystanders and on the spot decides to burnish his armor a less forbidding hue. To achieve a golden look, Goldberg colored the new armor yellow with orange highlights. He was on safe ground there because, while the Metal Men featured a gold-based robot

12¢
TALES OF SUSPENSE
40
APR.
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
FEATURING AMERICA'S NEWEST SUPER-HERO SENSATION...
"IRON MAN!"
HIS SIZE ALONE DOES NOT WORRY ME! BUT THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE, SOME SINISTER SECRET, BEHIND THE COMING OF... GARGANTUS!

named Gold, DC chose to color him a flat orange. Otherwise, instead of golden, Iron Man might have been pumpkin-hued by default!

"Now he didn't look like a robot and wasn't as scary-looking," Goldberg explained.

Problem solved. Until sales figures came in on Iron Man's earliest appearances and Lee decides to revamp his bulky bullet-headed armor and transform him into the sleek red and gold avenger of today.

Personally, while I like the original golden Iron Man, I think a metallic blue incarnation would have been intriguing. Years later, *The X-Men* featured a character in an Iron Man-like suit of armor who called himself the Cobalt Man. He was colored a nifty dark blue. I imagine a revamped blue Iron Man would have looked a lot like him. Except that he'd probably have been blue and gold, like the original X-Men.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention another possible impact on the choice of Iron Man's original color. *Tales of Suspense* #39 hit the stands the same month as *Amazing Spider-Man* #1. As originally colored in *Amazing Fantasy* #15, Spider-Man was red and blue-black. Steve Ditko has said in print that his original choice for Spider-Man's coloration was a warm red contrasting with a cool blue. However, with the blue-uniformed Fantastic Four guest-starring in that first issue, Lee and Goldberg felt it necessary to recolor the blue areas of Spider-Man's costume a reddish-purple, the better to separate and contrast the characters. It's possible that since the developing Marvel line of super-heroes tended to wear blue more often than not, avoiding a blue-armored Iron Man also stemmed from larger creative concerns.

Iron Man aside, there's another interesting Metal Men influence on comics. When writer-artist Russ Manning was working out his new science fiction series for Gold Key in 1962, he happened to look at one of the *Showcase issues* of Metal Men. Whether the robots influenced him or not, I don't know. But Manning once confided to a friend that he named the star of the new title after Dr. Will Magnus, creator of the Metal Men.

Manning's *Magnus Robot Fighter* hit the stands in November 1962 (cover-dated Feb 1963), just one month before Iron Man's debut, and three months before *Metal Men* #1's February 1963 release—making the turn of 1962-63 the dawn of a new era of robot-inspired comic books.

Makes one wonder what thinking went behind the creation of the Marvelesque Doom Patrol later in 1963. Could their robot member, Automaton (later redubbed Robotman after the similar Golden Age creation of Jerry Siegel), have been an attempt to do Iron Man the DC way?

TALES OF SUSPENSE
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP 12¢
42 JUNE
HOLD YOUR BREATH! HERE COMES IRON MAN!
SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A DEADLY FOE OF IRON MAN LEARNS OF HIS REAL IDENTITY!!
IRON MAN, YOU'VE BLUNDERED INTO THE RED BARBARIAN'S TRAP! THIS IS YOUR FINISH!

HOMESICK!
HE COULD SEE THE SPACE-STATION NOW, FLOATING LIKE SOME GIGANTIC WEIRDLY-SHAPED LIFE-RAFT UPON THE BLACK SEA OF SPACE. HE COULD SEE ITS LANDING RAMP AND ITS HATCHES AND THE LAUNCHING AREA WHERE, ONE YEAR BEFORE, HE... DAVID TODD... AND HIS BEST FRIEND... LAWRENCE ARDSLEY... HAD TAKEN OFF FOR MAN'S FIRST TRIP TO MARS. AND A THOUSAND MILES BEYOND, HE COULD SEE THE GREEN SPHERE OF EARTH... HOME...
IT WON'T BE LONG NOW, LYNN, BABY! IT WON'T BE LONG NOW! OH, HONEY... IF YOU ONLY KNEW HOW I'VE DREAMED OF THIS MOMENT!
YES, DAVID WAS COMING HOME... HOME TO LYNN ARDSLEY... LARRY'S WIFE. BUT LYNN WASN'T LARRY'S WIFE ANY LONGER. LYNN WAS A WIDOW! LARRY HAD DIED...
HELLO, SPACE STATION! HELLO... SPACE STATION! THIS IS COLONEL TODD ON MARS SPACE-ROCKET NUMBER X-2! COME IN, SPACE STATION! COME IN...
DAVID FLIPPED ON THE RECEIVER AND WAITED FOR THE SPACE-STATION TO ANSWER. HE THOUGHT ABOUT LYNN... BEAUTIFUL, DESIRABLE LYN. HE THOUGHT ABOUT THAT NIGHT... THE NIGHT SHE AND DAVID HAD PLANNED LARRY'S MURDER!
IT WOULD BE SO EASY, BABY! LARRY WOULD NEVER GIVE YOU UP! BUT UP THERE... ON MARS... WELL... ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN...
OH, DAVID! I'M... I'M SCARED! WHAT IF HE SUSPECTS?

Al Williamson's splash page for the story "Homesick!" from *Weird Fantasy* #18 (EC, Mar-Apr 1953).

Continued from page 43

And the vast majority of these we got from good black and white stats shot from the original art in the fifties. Both these aspects make the project fairly unique, *complete stories and good quality reproduction*. With Williamson's delicate line this is what really made the whole thing worthwhile.

The "Art" you could say is all the single illustrations, many previously unpublished, and the great sketches Williamson is known for that we included.

Biographically there's a terrific piece on Al's youth growing up in Bogotá, Columbia written by Mark Schultz, as well as an overview of his career up to 1960. The book only covers that period, his youth and up to 1960. I had to draw the line somewhere if I was going to cover what I wanted to cover the way I wanted to cover it. And ending there made sense for lots of reasons. I think another book on his work in the sixties would be nice.

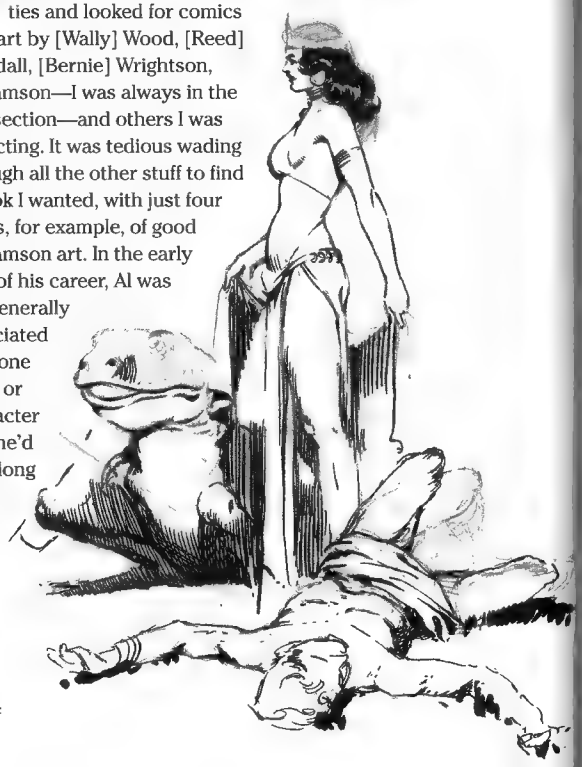
Baker: Does the title, *Hidden Lands*, have any special significance?

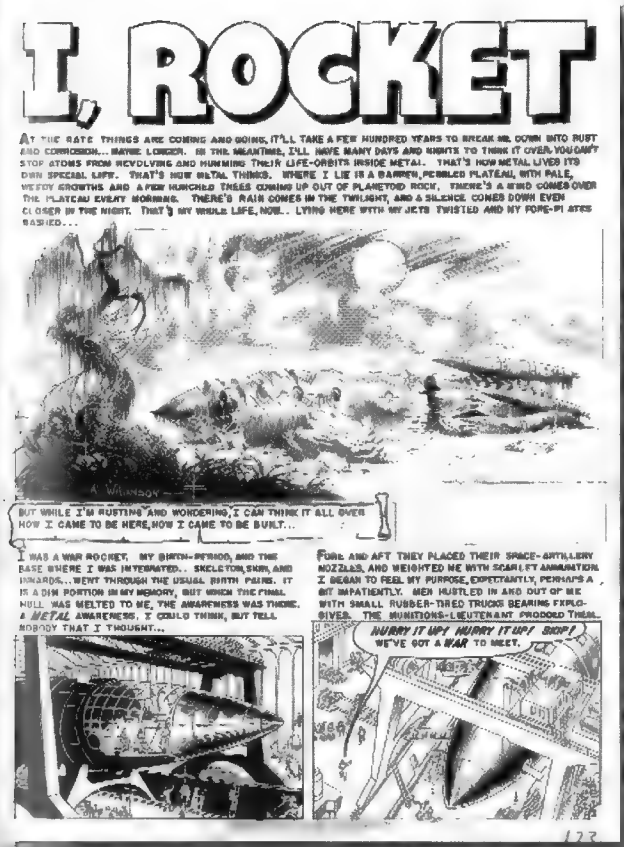
Yeates: We were thinking of "The Worlds of Williamson" or something like that but nobody was happy with it. The title wasn't that easy to come up with. Then, late one dark night "Hidden Lands" just came to me. Everyone seemed to agree it was the best choice. Al approved, and Chris Warner, who worked very close with me at Dark Horse, liked it because it highlights the fact that this is material that most fans aren't familiar with. Al is known for science fiction, but here we've got romance, war, Roman stories, jungle stories, fantasy, *lots* of westerns and of course science fiction too. Plus, of course, the previously unpublished work could be thought of as having been "hidden."

Baker: It's my understanding that this has been something of a long-term project for you. So how did this all begin? What sparked the initial idea, what was it originally and how did it develop into the form it's taking on today...and what took so long?

Yeates: What took so long indeed! This book is on its third publisher, first Eclipse, then Kitchen Sink, last Dark Horse. Much of the delay is due to publishers wanting to do the book because they love Al and his art, but not being in a hurry because this isn't going to be their bread and butter, and that has to come first. Initially the delay was just me taking the time it takes to do it right, and only working in my spare time. It was definitely a labor of love. I dig the material and I seem to be compelled to play Sherlock Holmes and try to track it down.

It all started, as mentioned in the book, when I attended comics conventions back in the late seventies and looked for comics with art by [Wally] Wood, [Reed] Crandall, [Bernie] Wrightson, Williamson—I was always in the "W" section—and others I was collecting. It was tedious wading through all the other stuff to find a book I wanted, with just four pages, for example, of good Williamson art. In the early part of his career, Al was not generally associated with one book or character that he'd do a long run with;




I, ROCKET
AT THE RATE THINGS ARE COMING AND GOING, IT'LL TAKE A FEW HUNDRED YEARS TO BREAK ME DOWN INTO RUST AND CORROSION... MAYBE LONGER. IN THE MEANTIME, I'LL HAVE MANY DAYS AND NIGHTS TO THINK IT OVER. YOU CAN'T STOP ATOMS FROM REVOLVING AND HUMMING THEIR LIFE-ORBITS INSIDE METAL. THAT'S HOW METAL LIVES ITS OWN SPECIAL LIFE. THAT'S HOW METAL THINGS. WHERE I LIE IN A BARREN, PEBBLED PLATEAU, WITH PALE, WEEDY GROWTHS AND A FEW HUNCHED TREES COMING UP OUT OF PLANETOID ROCK. THERE'S A WIND COMES OVER THE PLATEAU EVERY MORNING. THERE'S RAIN COMES IN THE TWILIGHT, AND A SILENCE COMES DOWN EVEN CLOSER IN THE NIGHT. THAT'S MY WHOLE LIFE, NOW... LYING HERE WITH MY JETS TWISTED AND MY FORE-PLATES BASHED...
BUT WHILE I'M RUSTING AND WONDERING, I CAN THINK IT ALL OVER HOW I CAME TO BE HERE, HOW I CAME TO BE BUILT...
I WAS A WAR ROCKET. MY BIRTH-PERIOD, AND THE BASE WHERE I WAS INTEGRATED... SKELETON, SKIN, AND INWARDS... WENT THROUGH THE USUAL BIRTH PAINS. IT IS A DIM PORTION IN MY MEMORY, BUT WHEN THE FINAL NULL WAS MELTED TO ME, THE AWARENESS WAS THERE. A METAL AWARENESS, I COULD THINK, BUT TELL NOBODY THAT I THOUGHT...
FORE AND AFT THEY PLACED THEIR SPACE-ARTILLERY NOZZLES, AND WEIGHTED ME WITH SCARLET AMMUNITION. I BEGAN TO FEEL MY PURPOSE, EXPECTANTLY, PERHAPS A BIT IMPATIENTLY. MEN HUSTLED IN AND OUT OF ME WITH SMALL RUBBER-TIRED TRUCKS BEARING EXPLOSIVES. THE MUNITIONS-LIEUTENANT PRODDED THEM.
HURRY IT UP! HURRY IT UP! STOP! WE'VE GOT A WAR TO MEET.

Al Williamson's splash page for the story "I, Rocket" from *Weird Fantasy* #20 (EC, Jul-Aug 1953).

it was a short story here and a short story there. So I thought, "All these great short stories should be collected together." Thus began the quest for this material.

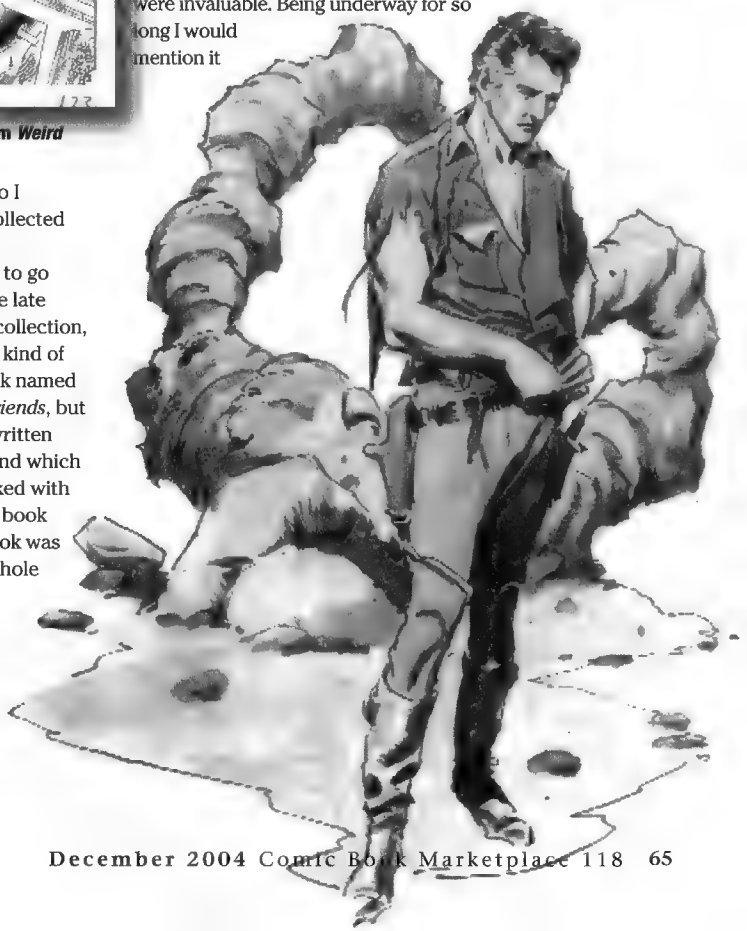
The project evolved through too many changes to go into. I had spent a lot of time with Williamson in the late seventies and early eighties, and saw his amazing collection, and lots of his own unused and unfinished art. So I kind of knew what was there. Al said that he wanted a book named after the Beatles song *With a Little Help From My Friends*, but with the "With a Little" crossed out, and "A **LOT**" written over it, so it read *A **LOT** of Help From My Friends*, and which would feature all the great artists he's known, worked with or admired. That morphed into the sidebars in my book on [Angelo] Torres, [Roy] Krenkel, etc. Also the book was initially going to be 350 pages or so and span his whole career, but Denis Kitchen convinced me that that would be impractical and I should break it up into volumes. So this is volume one. As it worked out it's still 220 something pages. Insight Studios put out *Al Williamson Adventures* last year which is most of what I would have put in a third volume, minus the biographical material and spot illos.

Baker: What are some of the surprises or highlights that the book might have presented to you, be they historical or otherwise?

Yeates: To elaborate on what I've already mentioned, I got incredible cooperation from Marvel. They are one company Al worked for in the fifties, aside from EC, who still had a decent archive of old material, from the fifties when they were called Atlas. Al was one of their top inkers ten years ago when I went after them in earnest, and they came through with the stats shot from the original art way back when which make up the bulk of this book. Also there are three previously unpublished *Jann of the Jungle* stories Al did for Atlas in '57. That was a real find. Al told me to look for them, and a wonderful fellow named Paul Curtis, then on staff at Marvel cracked the code used to file old stats and found this long lost material.

Baker: How did some of the other contributors get involved, and how difficult was it to convince them to participate?

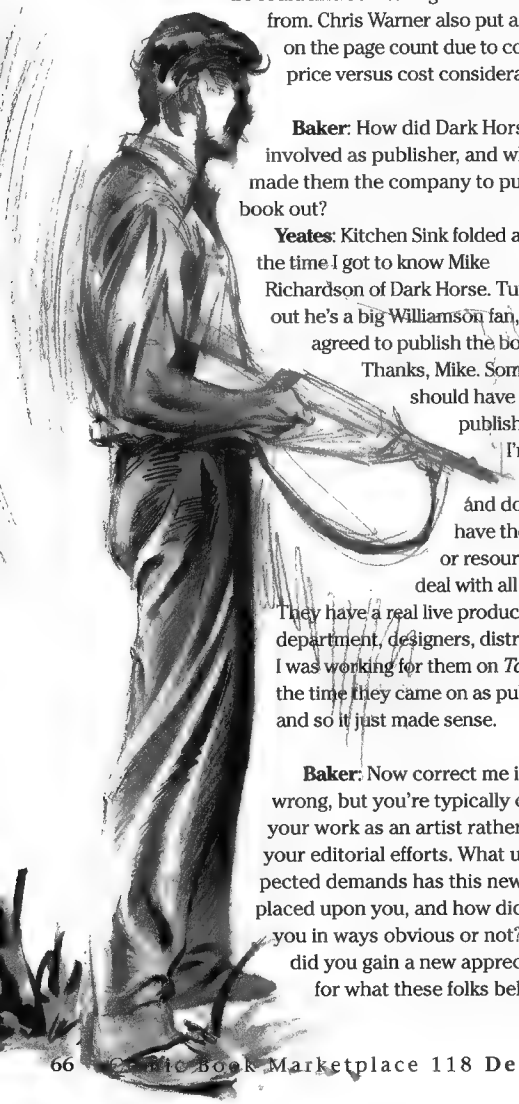
Yeates: Not difficult at all, we all did it for the love of it. In addition to Schultz, Steve Ringgenberg did quite a bit of writing. Tom Roberts and Ken Feduniewicz also helped write it. Many, many others like Jim Vadebonceour and Dave Justice were invaluable. Being underway for so long I would mention it



to various people over the years, and folks just came together to help when I asked. James Van Hise graciously let us steal liberally from the *Art of Al Williamson* book he did in '83. Interviews with Al done over the years by Ringgenberg, Schultz and myself supplied more info and anecdotes.

Baker: Were you able to get permission to use everything you wanted to, or did some stuff end up on "the cutting room floor" due to space considerations?

Yeates: So much stuff got left out due to space considerations, but I'm happy with what we ended up with. Actually there wasn't that much more that we could print well enough to make worthwhile. Budget was also a consideration; I couldn't use several stories because they belong to people who wanted too much money for the rights to use them, even if I could find something decent to shoot from. Chris Warner also put a limit on the page count due to cover price versus cost considerations.



Baker: How did Dark Horse get involved as publisher, and what made them the company to put this book out?

Yeates: Kitchen Sink folded around the time I got to know Mike Richardson of Dark Horse. Turned out he's a big Williamson fan, so he agreed to publish the book. Thanks, Mike. Some say I should have self-published but I'm too lazy and don't have the time or resources to deal with all that. They have a real live production department, designers, distribution, I was working for them on *Tarzan* at the time they came on as publisher, and so it just made sense.

Baker: Now correct me if I'm wrong, but you're typically cited for your work as an artist rather than your editorial efforts. What unexpected demands has this new role placed upon you, and how did it push you in ways obvious or not? And did you gain a new appreciation for what these folks behind the scenes do...and does this foreshadow a possible new career path for you?

BY GEORGE!!
NORTH OF BEIRUT, IN LEBANON, IN OCTOBER OF 1972, TWO ARCHAEOLOGISTS WILL BE DIGGING FOR RELICS OF THE ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS THAT ONCE FLOURISHED IN THAT AREA! THEIR EXCAVATIONS WILL UNCOVER A STRANGE OBJECT... SOMEWHAT RESEMBLING A LARGE BUILDING BLOCK! UPON IT, ETCHED INTO THE CUBE'S SMOOTH SURFACES, WILL BE...
LOOK, ALAN! INSCRIPTIONS! THEY COVER FIVE OF THE CUBE'S SIX FACES!
CAN YOU TRANSLATE, MARVIN?
THE ARCHAEOLOGIST NAMED MARVIN WILL EXAMINE THE MARKINGS CAREFULLY AND THEN ANNOUNCE...
THIS IS NOT A FAMILIAR ANCIENT LANGUAGE, ALAN! IT...IT SEEMS ALMOST ALIEN! LET ME KEEP THE CUBE AND WORK ON IT! PERHAPS...IN TIME...I CAN DECIPHER ITS INSCRIPTIONS!
AS YOU WISH, MARVIN! IT'S OF NO VALUE TO US AS IS! PERHAPS WHAT IS WRITTEN UPON IT WILL BE! KEEP IT, THEN! COME! LET US CONTINUE DIGGING!

Al Williamson's splash page for the story "By George!!" from *Weird Fantasy* #15 (EC, Sep-Oct 1952).

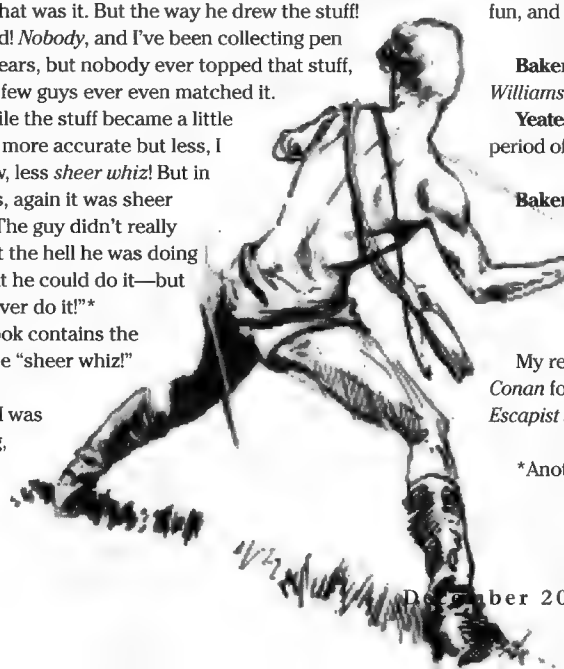
Yeates: Drawing comics may be how I make a living—if you can call it that—but there are lots of things I'm interested in. Editing is like making tapes of music, you don't create the source material, but you try and present it in an appealing way. And I have edited before. The four-issue *World of Wood* series at Eclipse, and Roy Krenkel's *Swordsmen and Saurians*, which Roy put together basically but which I got finished up and published, also with Eclipse. So editing is not foreign to me. I really dig it actually. But I don't see going into it full time or anything. Working with Chris Warner was great because he would bring me down to earth without compromising the quality of the book. Yes, I appreciate the work those folks do. Of course there's always something you wish had been done differently, I wish I could have micro-managed the design a little more in spots, but I'm not complaining.

Baker: All of this begs one important question, which is: Why do a book focusing on Al Williamson? What do you hope to accomplish with this book, realistically or ideally? Is there some aspect of his work in particular that sets it apart from that of his contemporaries? Also, does Williamson's

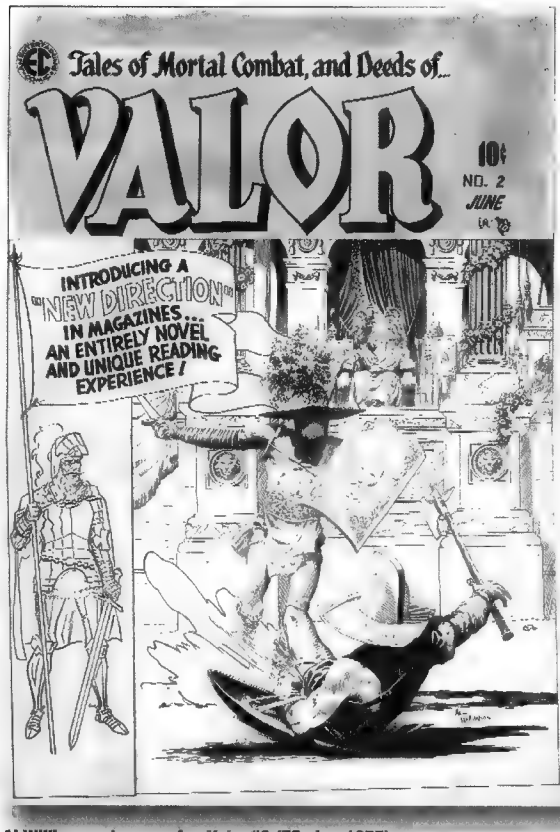
body of work, and perhaps the stories and illustrations in this book, have anything special to offer today's readers that they might not find elsewhere?

Yeates: I address this in the Afterword of the book. Basically to put all that different material into one book, so if I want to look at this stuff I can get a good satisfying chunk of it without wading through a lot of old brittle comics full of other stories I'm not so interested in. Hopefully others will feel the same way and enjoy this big gooey ice cream sundae of great stuff like I do. I think I've already said what sets it apart form other "art of" books. What sets his work apart? Flip through one of those old Atlas or ACG comics that have decent Williamson work and see for yourself. More than one collector has described coming across a job by Al as "a breath of fresh air." His good stuff just stands alone in those books. Why? Maybe because he loved comics and wasn't ashamed to be doing them. Sometimes it seems a lot of his contemporaries looked down on comics and wished they could get better work, but couldn't. Not the main guys everybody knows today, but that legion of other less known laborers in the field. Al *wanted* to be doing what he did. Not all his work is stellar, but that just makes him more human in some ways, and he's such a kick, such a big kid. What he has to offer today is the same as in yesteryear, terrific art and solid story telling. Let me quote Krenkel on this: "You know, Al would do doodles back then. He would just whip the stuff out and that stuff was incredible. Nobody ever drew better. To me, one of the most unfortunate things to the whole art world is that Al made little sketches and doodles for use and didn't expand them into pictures, as they were concepts and little scenes and little studies and things like that. He'd have a fragment of a hand and shoulder, an arm, an indication of a belt buckle or something like that, and that was it. But the way he drew the stuff! Oh, my god! *Nobody*, and I've been collecting pen work for years, but nobody ever topped that stuff, and damn few guys ever even matched it. After a while the stuff became a little stiffer and more accurate but less, I don't know, less *sheer whiz*! But in those days, again it was sheer accident. The guy didn't really know what the hell he was doing except that he could do it—but could he ever do it!"*

This book contains the art with the "sheer whiz!"



Baker: I was wondering, what


Tales of Mortal Combat, and Deeds of...
VALOR
10¢
NO. 2
JUNE
INTRODUCING A "NEW DIRECTION" IN MAGAZINES... AN ENTIRELY NOVEL AND UNIQUE READING EXPERIENCE!

Al Williamson's cover for *Valor* #2 (EC, Jun 1955).

do you get from doing this kind of work, be it personally or professionally—and how does it compare with what making art gives you?

Yeates: I just do it because I want to. I think the stuff deserves to be collected in a good book. And as I said, it's fun, and I learn a lot.

Baker: What would you like your audience to get from *Al Williamson: Hidden Lands*, be it today or in the far future?

Yeates: Entertainment. And a solid representation of this period of work from a major artist in the comics field.

Baker: Where would folks go to find out more information on this book? How about your own artistic endeavors on *Conan* and elsewhere?

Yeates: Go to www.darkhorse.com and search for Hidden Lands. You should find info and links to how to purchase the book. My regular work right now is helping Cary Nord pencil *Conan* for Dark Horse. I'm also penciling and inking an *Escapist* story for them.

*Another swipe from the Van Hise book.

by Michael Naiman

Duck Dates

As 2004 comes to a close let's remember the important Duck anniversaries that have just passed: **70 years ago** (June 9th 1934) - Donald Duck's first appearance in the short-film *The Wise Little Hen*; **60 years ago** (October 1944) - The name "Duckburg" is used for the very first time by Carl Barks in "High-Wire Daredevils" (*WDC* #49); **50 years ago** (March 1954) - The *Junior Woodchuck's Guidebook* first appearance in the Barks classic "Secret of Atlantis" (*US* #5) (Columnist's note: I have three versions of this in hardcover: English, Italian and French! I don't go anywhere without them!); **10 years ago** (May 1994) - The Eisner Award-winning Don Rosa epic 12-part *Life of Scrooge* saga is completed with the publishing of chapter 12.

Gemstone's *Uncle Scrooge* won an Eisner award in 2004. I'm afraid that this new "Best Publication for a Young Audience" award might be a Pyrrhic victory for the genre. Do you not realize that there is also a comics award titled "*Best Humor Title*"? That would have been the award that would have been notable in the overall industry. "*Best... for a Young Audience*" indicates that the nomination committee did not consider a Disney comic in any of the other categories of the Eisners as they had during the Gladstone days—indeed (in case you were not aware), there were no Disney titles or stories or creators mentioned in any of the other award category nominations as they had been mentioned repeatedly in years past.

I see this as setting a precedent for the future Eisners that no Disney comics will be considered for any other nominations other than this single "Best for a Young Audience" award; furthermore, any American comic reader who sees these awards will also have his notion confirmed that he should personally *never* consider reading a Disney comic, knowing that an institution no less revered than the Eisner Awards has labeled them definitively "for youngsters" as if they were ***Hello Kitty*** comics or something, even though they are written on a level easily equal to that of many "adult" American superhero comics (if not rather "above" that sort of stuff).

It will be nice if Gemstone can use this award for publicity/leverage into the bookstore markets that they crave and which may ensure their continued existence.

Perhaps a Disney title or story could have won in another category, as in the past, if the committee had given voters the chance to consider it. You see, it's *the nomination committee* that decides what stories the voters will be allowed to vote on. Perhaps the next Eisner award nomination committee will be more enlightened and turn the trend back to how it was in the past.

Recent auction and sales data on America's #1 detective, Dick Tracy, seems to indicate that he might be bumped up a grade the next time promotions are handed out. Recent sales include: the **Alfred Harvey Bound Publishers File Copies** of the Harvey imprint from 1952 featuring *Dick Tracy* #47-58 in VF condition sold for $359; Pre-Golden Age *Popular Comics* #3 (Apr 1936) featuring the third appearance of Tracy in a comicbook $143; *Super Comics* #87 VG $25. **The Adventures of Dick Tracy and Dick Tracy, Jr.** BLB (#710) in VF condition sold for $597 (1.4X *Guide*). A **Marx Dick Tracy Siren Police Pistol** (in original box) $600 3.75"x9.25"x1.75" deep box contains 8.5" long nicely designed gun © 1934 Famous Artists Syndicate. Box design includes Dick Tracy character illustrations on four side panels including front and back panels, which show him using the gun and saying, "Pull the Trigger and Call All Cars." One end flap has 1" tear w/clear tape repairs on inside, opposite end flap has 2" tear. Top panel has small .25" puncture. Gun is painted steel w/high gloss finish; siren attachment is tin litho and reads "Dick Tracy Siren Pistol." To the right of the siren attachment is a complete Dick Tracy portrait decal that includes Chester Gould signature.

Once again, I ask the question: Why would any reasonable and knowledgeable collector pay multiples of *Guide* for slabbed *Spider-Man* issues (that one cannot inspect, read or enjoy) when they can get it on line for: #41 NM $105 (25% of *Guide*), #45 VF/NM $128 (80% of *Guide*), #57 NM $140 (93% of *Guide*), #60 NM $120 (80% of *Guide*), #121 (Death of Gwen Stacy-6/73) NM $175 (70% of *Guide*), #129 (1st Punisher) NM $345 (86% of *Guide*). It's not like any of these issues are rare. Are any issues in the *ASM* run "*rare*"? (OK—I'll admit that #28 is nearly impossible in NM.) You can usually find any issue in any condition at any time!

While there's always plenty of time to jump on the Spidey comicbook bandwagon, how about hitching a ride on the following interesting Spidey toys? **Spider-Man Battery Operated Train Set** in excellent boxes VG $100, 12"x15"x3.25" deep box, made by Durham Industries Inc. © 1978 Marvel Comics Group. Set includes four railroad cars of oil tanker, diesel engine with working headlight and lighted cab, boxcar w/sliding door and work caboose plus over 8' of circular track. Cars are 6.75" to 8.5" long. All cars feature images of Spider-Man and oil tanker

CBM Market Watch

A report of market indicator sales (including % of Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide) by Michael Naiman

Action

#157	FN	$88	50%
#226	FN	$52	46%
#267	FN+	$90	63%

Adventure

#255	VF/NM	$178	85%
#259	VF+	$76	60%
#300	VF-	$283	101%

Amazing Spider-Man

#5	FN	$312	66%
#8	VF	$535	63%
#10	VF-	$400	47%
#11	VF+	$610	127%
#15	VF	$250	48%
#17	VF-	$400	72%
#17	VF/NM	$510	55%
#25	VF+	$210	91%
#27	VF+	$188	81%
#28	VF+	$345	75%
#38	VF	$42	30%
#41	FN	$53	71%
#43	VF	$48	44%
#92	VF/NM	$66	89%
#135	VF/NM	$55	77%
#300	VF/NM	$49	69%

Aquaman

#2	VF/NM	$255	75%

Atom

#1	VG	$46	32%
#2	VG	$54	87%
#3	VG	$43	98%
#4	FN	$29	57%
#5	FN	$43	84%
#6	VF-	$27	31%
#7	VF	$104	48%
#19	VF	$31	61%
#29	NM-	$156	74%
#29	VF	$36	33%

Batman

#171	NM-	$632	110%
#181	NM-	$250	Guide
#200	VF/NM	$72	47%
#232	NM-	$305	190%
#234	VF/NM	$152	Guide

Brave and Bold

#22	VF-	$128	49%
#23	FN-	$86	65%
#29	GD	$76	44%
#59	NM-	$135	90%

80 Page Giant

#1	VF-	$129	40%
#2	VF+	$129	71%
#3	VF/NM	$88	42%
#4	VF+	$189	130%
#5	VF/NM	$51	24%
#6	VF/NM	$106	58%
#7	VF	$203	121%
#8	VF/NM	$301	76%
#9	VF+	$72	61%
#10	VF/NM	$79	45%

Flash

#123	VG	$123	54%
#151	NM	$98	53%
#161	NM	$105	Guide
#170	NM	$178	161%
#175	NM	$293	117%
#184	VF/NM	$46	78%
#209	VF/NM	$26	72%
#210	VF+	$15	56%
#215	VF+	$22	76%

Green Lantern (SA)

#2	VG	$100	75%
#12	VF	$113	86%
#34	NM-	$138	92%
#40	VF+	$355	99%
#44	NM	$160	128%
#51	NM	$88	93%
#55	VF+	$27	50%
#86	NM	$122	122%

Hawkman

#1	FN	$129	84%
#2	VF	$56	33%
#3	VF+	$56	54%
#4	VF	$56	41%
#5	VF/NM	$154	101%
#23	VF	$25	63%

House of Mystery

#143	VF+	$187	120%
#144	VF/NM	$66	66%
#160	VF/NM	$61	55%

Justice League of Am.

#2	VG	$78	55%
#11	VF/NM	$256	112%
#48	NM	$150	136%

My Greatest Adventure

#80	FN	$139	105%

Superboy

#129	VF-	$26	47%
#137	VF+	$20	55%
#205	VF/NM	$29	66%

Superman

#191	VF	$30	60%
#195	VF+	$24	48%
#197	VF	$43	78%
#198	VF/NM	$42	62%
#216	VF+	$14	42%
#217	VF	$21	64%

Tales to Astonish

#4	FN	$173	131%
#7	VG+	$89	123%
#35	VG+	$270	96%
#41	VF+	$306	150%
#50	VF/NM	$108	86%
#51	VF/NM	$101	81%
#52	VF/NM	$103	68%
#56	VF/NM	$82	66%
#59	VF+	$191	101%
#60	VF+	$190	154%
#68	VF	$34	59%
#70	NM-	$119	79%
#70	VF	$46	71%
#100	FN+	$35	166%

Vampirella (mag)

#1	VF/NM	$410	91%
#3	NM	$998	190%
#5	NM	$82	59%
#6	NM	$43	32%
#7	NM	$41	29%
#8	NM	$133	89%
#9	NM	$111	79%
#10	NM	$111	158%
#11	NM	$115	135%
#12	NM	$76	89%
#17	NM	$82	109%
#19	NM	$72	76%
#20	NM	$110	147%

WDCS

#1	VG	$1993	65%
#11	VG	$280	197%
#20	GD	$26	45%
#23	GD	$30	65%
#27	GD	$34	74%
#32	GD+	$75	56%
#33	GD	$67	72%
#35	GD	$40	57%
#39	VG+	$83	90%
#49	GD	$31	84%
#54	VG+	$36	72%
#57	VG+	$41	82%
#67	FN	$56	85%

Wonder Woman

#100	VG	$46	79%
#103	VG	$35	80%
#109	FN+	$43	65%
#124	FN	$54	128%
#125	VG+	$40	142%
#129	FN	$35	129%
#137	FN+	$40	190%
#155	VF	$29	73%
#169	FN	$16	89%
#177	VF	$26	57%
#177	VF/NM	$46	73%
#178	VF	$29	58%
#214	VF+	$41	101%

World's Finest

#161	VF-	$15	35%
#175	VF/NM	$32	73%
#176	VF	$22	66%
#197	VF/NM	$31	65%
#223	VF+	$10	34%

X-Men

#23	VF+	$90	Guide
#24	VF	$57	63%
#25	VF+	$66	73%
#30	VF	$53	59%
#103	VF/NM	$59	Guide
#105	VF/NM	$59	Guide
#137	NM	$50	142%
#140	NM	$35	Guide
#142	NM	$50	Guide

features Spider-Man villains Scorpion, Tarantula and The Jackal. Box comes w/original price tag and tape on sides. Window on box for oil tanker has been broken in upper right corner. **Spider-Man Head Bust Bank** NM $32

measuring 4.25"x4.25"x10.75" tall. Made by J. Renzi Corp. © 1978 Marvel Comics Group. Bank is plastic bust of Spider-Man w/eye details painted on. Chest of bust features "The Amazing Spider-Man" comic book title logo. Left

and right sides feature a 3" sticker reading "*Original Super Hero Collector's Edition Bank The Amazing Spider-Man.*" **The Merry Marvel Marching Society Membership Kit** (1st

[continued on page 70]

issue) NM $248. Kit included 3" button, membership card, flexi-disc record, seven MMMS cards, acceptance letter and mailing envelope. Button reads "*I Belong*" and has the Human Torch, Spider-Man and The Thing, who is carrying a flag that reads "*The Merry Marvel Marching Society*." "*The Voices of Marvel*" record is sealed as issued and contains a 33-1/3 rpm thin vinyl record which was recorded with message from the Marvel Bullpen. Record sleeve is 8"x8". MMMS cards have six of seven stuck together but one is loose.

The Foundation and Standard Bearer of the Hobby will always be a strong seller—*Superman* #3 VF $3827 (76% of *Guide*), #6 VG $1000 (1.66X *Guide*), #22 GD $126 (*Guide*), #41 VG $162 (*Guide*), #87 FN $230 (1.43X *Guide*), #140 NM $275 (1.05X *Guide*).

Supes sideline collectibles that should be in your collection include: **Superman-Tim Ring** NM $2000 silver luster ring with a solid non-adjustable band. Each side of ring has symbols representing coded letters. Ring top shows Superman as if flying with the club initials below "ST." **Superman first non-paper giveaway** $100 7/8" litho tin button is from 1939. Reverse has blue lettering on silver "Read Superman Action Comics Magazine." **Superman Speed Game** $100. This classic early 1940s game by Milton Bradley came in different size boxes and playing pieces also varied. Box is 8.75"x15.5"x1.75" deep and is also version marked "Good Bradley Games" at top left corner. Lid features art of Superman leaping over buildings while side panels feature different small action images of him. Board is 13.25"x16.5" and at center is office scene depicting Perry White behind his desk next to vacant desk of Clark Kent. This is surrounded by repeated small images of Superman breaking chains. This version comes with die-cut cardboard Superman playing pieces (other version came with standard wood playing pieces to represent Superman). **Superman Playsuit** VG $925 two-piece "Size 6" outfit c. 1940 by A. S. Fishbach, missing the cape. This was a store item heavily promoted by Macy's and also used as a premium and pictured in the Superman Bubble Gum Club prize folder. Two versions of the shirt were produced, one with sleeves and one sleeveless. This is the version with sleeves and body measuring 15"x16", 37" in length from sleeve to sleeve. Silk screened design on chest is "S" emblem with name above. Pants are 10x24" long designed with elastic waist and single button. Front features great silk screened design depicting Superman's trunks and legs with additional images at waist area of two different Superman poses and a belt w/pair of "S" accents. **Superman *Supermen of America* complete membership kit** $465. This is a later issue from 1961 of club initially started in 1939 and which ran to 1965. Original mailing envelope is 6"x9". Letter is 5.5"x8.25" welcoming member and noting club items as well as Superman's appearance in comic books. Certificate is 8.5"x11" and includes facsimile signature of "Clark Kent." The Secret Code folder is 5.5"x7.25" card stock. All three paper items are © 1961 National Periodical Publications Inc. The button is 1.25" diameter, also w/1961 copyright on rim curl. Features classic image of Superman breaking chains with words "Strength/Courage/Justice" above.

Strength, Courage and Justice for all in 2005!

CBM Market Reports

Michael Tierney
Collector's Edition
3217 John F. Kennedy Blvd.
North Little Rock, AR 72116
501-791-4222
cbsrock@swbell.net

Over the last year, my local sales trends have seen demand for new releases steadily shifting to DC, making them firmly my #1 new comics publisher. *Superman/Batman* was blistering hot, with back issues impossible to keep in stock, until tardy shipping killed interest. *Green Lantern Rebirth* hit the ground running and has never slowed. There's a lot of fan interest to see Hal Jordan's return to prominence. New readers did like Kyle Rayner as Green Lantern, and Hal Jordan's transition into the Spectre was interesting. But the "Hal went psycho and killed his friends" part never did set well with long-term readers. They considered that whole storyline to be contrived.

Marvel has been rapidly expanding their product line in recent months, but this looks to have been a case of quantity over quality. For example, *Elektra the Hand* may feature Daredevil's femme fatale in the title, but she's nowhere to be found inside the covers. As a result, *Elektra the Hand* has sold as few as 4% of initial orders. That's a staggering failure in a non-returnable market.

Fortunately, Marvel's failure in the new market comics still hasn't hurt demand for their Silver Age books. DC may have a longer history than Marvel, but Marvel's key books are more readily available when it comes to Silver Age versus Golden Age. And more affordable: *Amazing Spider-Man* #39 VG+ $50; *Avengers* #2 VG $85; *Fantastic Four* #48 FA $18.75, #59 VG+ $19.75, #73 VG+ $12.75, #79 VG+ $9.75; *Giant-Sized X-Men* #1 VG $65; *Incredible Hulk* #3 VG- $195; *Journey Into Mystery* #104 (Thor) GD $12; *X-Men* #1 FA $97; *Uncanny X-Men* #132 NM $19.

DC's Silver Age product is showing increasing demand, but outside the late 1950s, there aren't nearly as many important key issues: *Atom* #3 VG+ $37; *Blackhawk* FN- $19; *Brave and Bold* #76

FN $9.75, #81 VG+ $9; *Detective Comics* #287 GD- $18, #293 GD- $14; Metal Men (Vol. 1) #10 VG+ $18, #32 VG+ $13.75; *Superboy* #101 FN $9; *Superman's Girlfriend Lois Lane* #43 VG $14.25.

Jamie Newbold

SoCal Comics
8280 Clairemont Mesa Blvd #124
San Diego, CA 92111
858-715-8669
Socalcom@aol.com

San Diego is enjoying some wet weather for a change and hot temperatures have relaxed. Business has changed as well. August following the San Diego ComiCon proved to be very lucrative for us. September followed August's sales success on eBay and in our store, but we lost a little ground as we entered October. We move a variety of comic books through eBay and find little predictability in the market. It's a "hit and miss" scenario for us. The store sees regular customers come and go based upon a transitory work force; the nature of San Diego's economy/high living costs and the effects of the war in Iraq on our military population.

Our ability to find worthwhile collections of better graded, older comics has been less than fruitful in the last two months. We blew through a lot of good stuff at the summer convention and have yet to replace that material.

CBM Market Meister Michael asked me to comment on the customer demographics at our store. The business attracts a multi-ethnic customer base. Women and kids are the minority. The age group is massed between 20-50. The division is most plainly noticed at around 30 years of age. The over 30s are only slightly interested in Golden Age. Early Silver fascinates them and they can afford that material in various grades. The Marvel "keys" are the grail of comics and grade is only secondary to affordability. A portion of my over-30 crowd is satisfied with trade reprints. The under-30 back issue people hold the Bronze Age in esteem equal to the Silver Age. Marvels over DCs. Neal Adams is the big draw for both age levels when collecting DC. The younger buyers are frequently hard-pressed to buy what they want so they routinely settle on the comics they can afford—either lower grade copies from me or the crapshoot copies on eBay. Their demand for late Silver-Bronze Age "keys" has driven up my prices for these comics in all grades.

One fascinating note is the ongoing, near-feverish demand for variant covered new comics. The 20-something crowd definitely drives this market. The dealer incentive covers that Marvel is offering with greater frequency have lit a fire under new comics readers.

The incentive issues are comics produced in very limited quantities. They are released in proportion to the regular issue in a run but offer a different cover. These comics are essentially free to dealers once they reach a certain order quota. Scarcity of the cover variant in relation to demand drives prices through the roof. Unfortunately we rarely see the comic hold its highest value. Most of these variants have lost value and end up on eBay at reduced prices within a month or two. *Astonishing X-Men* #1 Cassaday variant sold for close to $300 on release day unslabbed. Now, it's as cheap as $30 at comic conventions and eBay—slabbed and unslabbed. Buyers don't despair. They wait to see if the market value will increase over time. If the title is hot we all wonder if the variants might see increases in demands down the road.

One proof of this is a sale we made. We purchased an *Ultimate Spider-Man* #1 white dealer incentive variant earlier this year. Unslabbed we paid $150 for a comic book that was released for free to dealers in 2000. We offered it through the store at $900 and got no takers. We entertained a lot of silly comments and semi-interested buyers but no takers. We sent it off to CGC and got back a 9.8. Not surprising considering it had an all-white cover! We displayed it at the store and got the same "lookiloos" and "naysayers". Finally, we put it on eBay and watched it close for a shocking $1,325! Others within my realm saw this and wait for their turn.

Golden Age: *Donald Duck FC* #189 GD+ $65; *Superman* #2 PR/FA $400, #7 FA/GD $225.

Silver Age: *Action Comics* #280 FN+ $55; *Amazing Spider-Man* #18 FN $132, #91 VF/NM $74; *Avengers* #4 FN- $370, #16 VF $142, #88 NM- $42; *Green Lantern* #21 NM $175; *Thor* #176 NM- $45.

Bronze Age: *Adventure Comics* #440 NM $50; *Amazing Spider-Man* #194 VF $25; *Uncanny X-Men* #129 VF $38, #141 NM $40.

Doug Sulipa's Comic World

Box 21986
Steinbach MB Canada R5G 1B5
Phone 204-346-3674, FAX 204-346-1632
Email: cworld@mts.net
www.dougcomicworld.com

Last quarter I reported that late Silver Age to Bronze horror comics and mags were hot and still heating up. In the last two months, you can double that again. They are now all selling (especially in higher grades), but also in all other grades too. Traditionally for the last ten years, they have been about 10% of my comics sold (which is perhaps double many other sellers). In the first half of 2004, they reached 30 to 40% of my sales. But in September-October 2004 they approached 60% of my comic sales. Rather than the usual 100s of horror comics, 1000s have been shipped from our warehouse in the last six months. Needless to say, my supplies are diminishing, as I frantically try to re-stock at higher and higher prices, as my many sources are also running out. In addition to the many buyers that want VF, VF/NM and NM copies, the low to middle grade collectors are back in force. I have now had several buyers begin fresh sets that they have no copies of, and buy entire average grade runs of comics like: *Creepy*, *Eerie*, *Boris Karloff*, *Witching Hour*, *Weird War*, all the Marvel mags, *Tomb of Dracula*, Charlton titles and many others.

The best selling horror/SF comics in the last two months were (in approximate order from *top* seller to medium sellers): *Creepy*, *Eerie*, *Many Ghosts of Dr Graves*, *House of Mystery*, *House of Secrets*, *Dracula Lives*, *Ghostly Tales*, *Haunted*, *Vampire Tales*, *Ghosts*, *Weird War*, *Ghost Manor*, *Witching Hour*, *Tales of the Zombie*, *Tomb of Dracula*, *Werewolf by Night*, *Nightmare*, *Psycho*, *Scary Tales*, *Red Circle Sorcery*, *Madhouse* #95-97, *Scream*, *Supernatural Thrillers*, *Uncanny Tales*, *Vault of Evil*, *Beware*, *Chamber of Chills*, *Vampirella*, *Creepy Things*, *Twilight Zone*, *Secrets of Haunted House*, *Midnight Tales*, *Unexpected*, *Monsters Unleashed*, *Forbidden Tales of Dark Mansion*, *Fear*, *Monster Hunters*, *War is Hell* #9-15, *Time Warp*, *Man-Thing*, *Frankenstein*, *Boris Karloff*, *Phantom Stranger*, *Dead of Night*, *Black Magic*, *Doorway to Nightmare*, *Adventures into Unknown Worlds*, *Forbidden Worlds*, *Unknown Worlds*, *Haunted Love*, *Ripley's Believe it or Not*, *Unknown Worlds of Science Fiction*, *Planet of Vampires*, *Grim Ghost*, *Tales of Evil*, *Weird Suspense*, and MORE.

I see that CGC is now slabbing both *National Lampoon* and *Famous Monsters*. The *key* issues are scarce in true high grade and should produce some record prices in the next one to two years. *Famous Monsters* #1 in 9.4 would easily break the $10,000 barrier. They are also slabbing odd items like *Heavy Metal*. Since *Playboy* #1 in VG brings about $2000, it would be interesting if CGC started to grade them. A *Playboy* #1 in 9.6 would bring an amazing price ($20,000+?). Key issues of *Sports illustrated*, (like the Mickey Mantle Card issue, first Jordan and others) would also bring record prices. It would be nice if they could expand into these non-comic items.

The early Bronze Marvel and DC keys remain much requested, but difficult to keep in stock in better than FN. What some do not seem to realize is that paying too many multiples at the top of the market is often not the best time to buy. Prices tend to get a bit inflated. A Marvel *Spotlight* #5 in 9.6 recently finished at $3427 on eBay. You can still get nice *MS* #5s in VF in the $125 range, thus it seems a tad high. One could buy perhaps 30 of the hottest $50-$200 range Bronze keys for that kind of money, or you could buy a nice *Amazing Spider-Man* #1 in FN for $2500 and still have funds to spend on other goodies. Comiclink has a *TMNT* #1 in 9.6 for sale asking a whopping $10,000 and I suspect it might sell at that price. It seems everyone wants the same 30 or so Bronze keys at the expense of all the better priced and still overlooked items of the era. The *most* requested Bronze key issues currently include: *Albedo* #2; *Amazing Spider-Man* #129; *Batman* #219, 227, 232, 237, 243-245; *Blazing Combat* #1; *Cerebus* #1; *Creepy* #32; *Detective* #359, 369, 400; *Eerie* #17, 23; *Ghost Rider* #1; *Gothic Romances* #1; *Gothic Tales of Love* #1-3; *Green Lantern* #76; *Hero For Hire* #1; *Sword of Conan* #1(High Grade), #235 (any grade); *TMNT* #1; *Tomb of Dracula* #1, #10; *Vampirella* #1; *Werewolf by Night* #1, #32. I have found that demand for the *X-Men* #94, *GS* #1 and *Hulk* #181 has cooled a bit, with prices a bit softer at the moment. Buyers are advised to get the 100s of other still undervalued Bronze key issues, while the heat is on the above titles. Do not forget, there are many other publishers beyond Marvel and DC!

The number of comic book collectors probably approximately doubled in each five-year period from 1955 (EC era) thru 1985 (end of Bronze era). Thus, although Silver Age Marvels are extremely important, there were far more "collectors" that grew up collecting Bronze Age comics. The major Silver Age Marvel keys now cost more than the major Golden Age keys cost in 1984. Thus, those who grew up with the Bronze comics view Silver Age as the 1984 collectors once viewed Golden Age (nice to look at, but too expensive to actually collect). Those who think Bronze Age comics cannot still escalate vastly underestimate this market and the huge potential. The supply of even strict VF copies is disappearing at an alarming rate.

The biggest events of the 1970s (all *hot* at the time in the first one to six months) for those who lived thru the period were: *Conan the Barbarian*, Jack Kirby moves to DC, *Shazam*, *Star Wars* and *Howard the Duck*. Most of the releases that we now view as important Bronze Age books were not initially hot, thus were held in smaller quantities and gained momentum over the years. These slow starters include: Adams *Batmans*; Marvel horror; *Ghost Rider*; *New X-Men*; *Hulk* #181; *Amazing Spider-Man* #121, 122, 129; and most Treasuries and magazines.

In standard average grade comics I have had a lot of sales in long-running and well known characters. Not always hot, but typically constant solid sellers, some of these titles are beginning to get harder to restock. I have recently filled in many runs and sold several large groups of these classic comic characters: Blondie, Conan, Dick Tracy, Lone Ranger, Phantom, Popeye, Sad Sack, Tarzan and Turok.

From the Silver Age we have been selling quite a few 1961-1964 Marvel super-hero books in the GD-FN range at near *Guide* prices. In the last few months we have had a larger than usual amount of people filling in gaps in their 1965-1985 Marvel, DC, Charlton and Gold Key runs, typically in VG to VF grades. Having almost all these books always in stock is one of the areas in which we have always excelled, and customers always like being able to get almost everything in one place. It is always refreshing to assist fans who enjoy the comics themselves and are not terribly concerned about investment potential.

An interesting area related to our hobby is cartoons on VHS video tapes. As the VHS format continues to die, more and more people are dumping off their VHS collections. Most consider them to have no future value, but they would be incorrect. As with vinyl records, *much* of the material on VHS tape will never again appear in the newer formats. Yes, there will be people willing

to sell you poorly made bootlegs on eBay, but do you really want to send money to these risky sellers and then end up with illegal products? Most out-of-print cartoons are still valued in the $4-$8 range, with scarcer and obscure titles bringing $9-$20 and up. Just a few of the collected tapes include: *Care Bears*, *G. I. Joe*, Hanna-Barbera cartoons, *Kissyfur*, Looney Tunes short cartoons, MANGA, Marvel cartoons, *Mr. Magoo*, religious/Christian cartoons, *Spider-Man*, *Thunderbirds*, *Transformers*, Walt Disney short cartoons.

The Marvel Value Stamp Books Series-A (1974/75) and Series-B (1975/76) have been a curse on collecting for about 30 years now. You purchased a booklet, then began the process of gathering100 "Value Stamps" that had to be cut out of actual comics. Many tens of thousands of comics had these stamps removed in the period and many remain on the market today, greatly devaluing the books they were removed from. The Series-A book includes the notorious Stamp #54 *Shanna the She-Devil*, which is *scarce* because you could *only* cut it out of *Hulk* #181. Series-A was perhaps two to three times more popular than Series-B, thus Series-B books are scarcer. The booklet is normally in lower grade and tough to find in the VF range. Completed books, with all 100 stamps, are considered highly desirable. NM books with no stamps bring much lower prices. On top of this many stamps were cut out uneven, both under trimmed and over trimmed. Once the stamps are glued in, most copies are badly warped, with heavy waves through the book, due to owners using too much glue. Nice examples that lie flat with virtually no waves and with nicely trimmed stamps bring premium prices. Battered but complete copies bring around $75 per book, while higher grade examples can bring $150-$200 or more.

We finally listed our large inventory of portfolios and calendars on our website. These included items related to: comics, science fiction, music, characters, advertising promo items, and misc. general items. Many of these items are actually quite scarce to rare in the marketplace and would make good long term investments. In the meantime, you get the bonus of nice display items. Most of the 1975-1985 era comic related portfolios had small print runs of 500 to 3000 copies each. *Many* big-name characters and artists were represented in portfolios including: Adams, Batman, Conan, Corben, EC Comics, Elfquest, Fabian, Finlay, Frazetta, Godzilla, Grell, Hulk, Stephen King, Kirby, Perez, Shadow, Spider-Man, Star Trek, Star Wars, Superman, J. R. R. Tolkein, Barry Windsor-Smith, Wrightson, X-Men.

Most portfolios can still be bought in the $15-$35 price range, but the scarce ones can run you $50-$100 and up. I have not seen a Tu Penny (sp?) *Conan* portfolio in a while, but imagine it is worth in the $200-$300+ range. Frazetta's *Women of the Ages* is in the $150-$200+ range. The 1970s Marvel and DC calendars have been quite collectible for many years now, with most bringing in the $20-$40 range. They have mostly new material by many popular artists. The *Mighty Marvel* 1976 Bicentennial and *Mighty Marvel Comics Memory Album* 1977 calendars are loaded with great characters and artists, a must for Marvel fans. The *Super DC* (Comics) 1976 and 1977 calendars both have new art by Neal Adams, but the 1976 sells best as it is an *all* Adams calendar.

Dale Moore

Comics4Kids
20825 State Rt. 410 East #413
Bonney Lake, WA 98390
253-826-3889
www.comics4kids.org
comics4kids@aol.com

Nice show season this year! As we head into the Major Holidays be sure to celebrate for the right reasons! Nice also is the uncovering of runs of *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, *Eerie*, *Creepy*, *Vampirella*, and other esoteric titles of the '60s monster magazines, the majority in investment (9.2 or higher) grade, with duplicates. We anticipate the Emerald City Convention in February 2005 to attract Wizard World into capitalizing on a Northwest show, attracting all the Northwest Canadians down here, hopefully they would schedule for warmer travel weather though! Wizard World Seattle, here we come!

You'll notice in this report some less expensive items, as we are not trying to break the bank, just getting postage to send comics to the kids and buy some collections to turn over to them. We have updated our website and have begun grading and appraising comic book collections in the Pacific Northwest area, including Western Canada, Washington, Oregon and Idaho. We make house calls and charge a flat fee (for travel) and $1.00 per book. In August we spent a week on a collection, and just the other day we got a college student going on eBay.

Modern Age: *Night of the Living Dead: London* #1 $6.51, and all related titles strong sellers. *30 Days of Night* #3 VF $5.50, not too many of this series turning up locally.

Adult comics sell consistently at cover price and prices quickly escalate when heading back into true underground comics. There are virtually no undergrounds being offered for sale lately at shows. Sales are slowing on Bettie Page and Pamela Anderson comics, Marilyn Monroe is a great seller though. Mid-Number *Alias* and (Gaiman) *Sandman* are selling well at cover price, regardless of trade paperbacks killing the market for the first issues. *American Flagg!* is selling well, as readers realize the true genius of Howard Chaykin. Any relation to Dan Chaykin?

In *CBM* #113 (June 2004 with #112 cover) we mentioned that Chaykin and Tischman were doing *Bite Club*. Well, we were half right and wanted to mention Chaykin and Tischman as writers and David Hahn as artist. We are looking forward to their next collaboration, again with the Frank Quietly covers!

Men in Black (Aircel 1990) is in

demand—#1 VF $29.99; Superman/Batman is consistent, as are Identity Crisis and *Titans/Young Justice*; *Graduation Day* #1-3 set $15.50; *Ghost in the Shell* is sparse in back issue bins, mid grade sets #1-8 $20.50; *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* doing well, regardless of printing; *Metal Hurlant* is a surprise with all copies quickly gobbled up when offered—very cool reading—reminds me of *Epic Illustrated* more than *Heavy Metal*. Could be just me, though. Thoughts?

Captain America #241 reprint NM $9.99, #255 Miller cover VF $5.99; *Wolverine* #10 VF $27; *Marvel Comics Presents* selling well in groups, particularly *Weapon X*. Any Todd McFarlane *Amazing Spider-Man* fly out, with *Incredible Hulk* issues falling behind.

The December 2004 *Playboy* with Glen David Gold's article on original comic book art is most requested, with many people buying multiple copies. Might have nothing to do with the full-page Neal Adams' Batman and a double-page foldout by none other than Jazzy Johnny Romita of the *Amazing Spider-Man*! It could be delectable Denise Richards (*Wild Things*, *Starship Troopers*) losing her worldly belongings on a stretch of beach, but your guess is as good as mine!

Bronze Age: *Werewolf by Night* #32 VF $56; *Weird War Tales* #1-70 and 94 are hot—say, when are we going to get our *Creature Commandos* on late night HBO a la *Spawn*?; *Ghosts* #1-100 in any grade; *Rawhide Kid Kingsize Special* #1 NM $19.99; *Rawhide Kid* #74 NM $19.99, #83 NM $9.99, #91 NM $9.99, #92 NM $19.99, #96 NM $9.99; *Where Monsters Dwell* #2 NM $2.88, #3 NM $1.75, #4 NM $.99; *Where Monsters Roam* #1 NM $15.50; *Incredible Hulk* #181 NM- $850, #181 GD $75; *Unexpected* #106 VG $4.50.

Silver Age: *Brave and the Bold* #28 coverless $100, #28 GD $300, #30 GD $45, #54 VF $90.98; *Vampirella* #1 VG $51; *Teen Titans* #1 FN $82; *Fantastic Four* #31 VG $8, #37 VG $4.99, #39 VG $12.61; *Amazing Spider-Man* #1 coverless $177, #39 GD+ $20, #40 VF $201, #40 VF $199.99, #42 FN- $45, #46 GD $2.25, #47 FN $22, #48 VG $11, #49 FN $15, #77 FN $9; *Superman* #227 (G-72) VF $9.99; *Captain Marvel* #7 FN $6, #8 FN $4.99, #13 FN $5.75; *Phantom Stranger* #16 FN $4; *Mysterious Suspense* #1 VF $6; *Adventure Comics* #269 VG $70.

Golden Age: *Special Edition Comics* #1 GD $500; *Mad* #1 GD $250; *Slave Girl Comics* #2 VF $550; *Land of the Lost* #2 FN $100, #4 VG $60; *Mickey Mouse* V3 #3 VG $86; *Best Western* #58 GD+ $19.99; *Famous Funnies* #211 FN $188; *Ibis the Invincible* #3 VG $51; *Four Color* #16 (Mickey) GD- $721.

A new trend has developed in the field, as the Heavy Metal generation comes into power: June 1966 cover dated comics, or "Triple-Six" collections. Scooped up and encapsulated, this set might be a contender for the new Black in 2005. There are 72 confirmed issues, with another 29 proposed but unconfirmed as of this writing. Like-minded individuals, feel free to add your comments—email us.

"Triple Six" Collection-Confirmed: *Action Comics* #338; *Adventure Comics* #345; *Adventures Into the Unknown* #164; *Adventures of Bob Hope* #99; *Amazing Spider-Man* #37; Aquaman #27 Atom #25; *Avengers* #29; *Batman* #181; *Beverly Hillbillies* #13; *Bewitched* #5; *Big Valley* #1; *Blackhawk* #221; *Brave and the Bold* #66; *Captain Marvel* (MF) #2; *Cave Kids* #13; *Challengers of the Unknown* #50; *Daredevil* #17; *Detective Comics* #352; *Doctor Solar* #16; *Doom Patrol* #104; *Fantastic Four* #51; *Fantasy Masterpieces* #3; *Flash* #162; *Flintstones* #34; *Forbidden Worlds* #135; *G.I. Combat* #118; *Ghostly Tales* #56; *Girls' Romances* #121; *Go-Go* #1; *Green Lantern* #45; *Hawkman* #14; *Heart Throbs* #102; *Herbie* #18; *Hogan's Heroes* #1; *House of Mystery* #159; *House of Secrets* #78; *Jetsons* #21; *Josie* #19; *Judo Master* #87; *Justice League of America* #45; *Kid Colt, Outlaw* #128; *Korak* #13; *Marvel Collector's Item Classics* #3; *Marvel Tales* #3; *Metal Men* #20; *Metamorpho* #6; *Mickey Mouse* #108; *Millie the Model* #139; *Munsters* #7; *Mystery in Space* #108; *Our Army at War* #168; *Porky Pig* #6; *Sea Devils* #29; *Sgt. Fury* #31; *Showcase* #62; *Star Spangled War Stories* #127; *Strange Adventures* #189; *Strange Tales* #145; *Sugar and Spike* #65; *Superboy* #130; *Superman* #187; *Superman's Pal, Jimmy Olsen* #93; *Tales of Suspense* #78; *Tales to Astonish* #80; *Teen Titans* #3; *Thor* #129; *T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents* #5; *Two-Gun Kid* #81; *Unknown Worlds* #48; *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* #309; *Wild, Wild West* #1; *World's Finest* #158; *X-Men* #21. **Unconfirmed** (any information would be appreciated): *All-American Men of War*; *Captain Atom*; *Daniel Boone*; *Donald Duck*; *Flyman*; *Huckleberry Hound*; *Life with Archie* ; *Little Dot's Uncles*; *Man from U.N.C.L.E.*; *March of Comics*; *Marge's Little Lulu*; *Patsy and Hedy Phantom*; *Richie Rich $ucce$$*; *Shadows from Beyond*; *Space Adventures*; *Space Family Robinson*; *Summer Love*; *Superman's Girlfriend, Lois Lane*; *Tarzan*; *Tippy Teen*; *Tomahawk*; *Turok*; *Uncle Scrooge*; *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*; *Zorro*.

Within reason, these issues do not necessarily have low print runs, and the key ratio is slight, making them affordable in high grade. We look forward to corroboration of information and new discoveries!

In closing, we have made a generalization for *non-key* sales expectations on eBay—broken down by era—for complete GD to FN condition copies (mid grade): Golden Age $15-$40; Silver Age $7-$11; Bronze Age $3-$6; Modern Age $1-$2. Of course, with some surprises for completists and ego bidders.

Bruce Edwards

Quasar Comics and Collectibles
PO Box 2227
Louisville, KY 40201
502-451-4852
www.QuasarComics.com
ebay: quasarcomics

We have had a decent amount of eBay activity of late. Prices range from outright bargains to solid prices compared to *Guide*. For those of you wondering if some of these low prices could be due to over-grading, the answer is no! Ask Michael Naiman and check my feedback for confirmation. So, what does this mean? Simply that comics will consistently sell on eBay, but the price is not necessarily

near *Guide* although it can, at times, be over the *Guide* price.

Actually, this is not a bad scenario. If you sell like I do, with almost never a reserve, you are truly testing the liquidity of the market. Most collectibles markets have historically *not* been very liquid. Strong support from many titles show that the comic market is healthy, but if you want to sell through on eBay, you must take the cheap with the good prices realized. Here are some examples:

All Flash Comics #13 G/VG $56; *All Star Comics* #49 Apparent VG+ $82; *Amazing Spider-Man* #121 VG+ $40, #129 FN+ $148; *Astonishing* #53 VG+ $16; *Astonishing Tales* #1 (1970) FN $3; *Avengers* #1 FN- (TV) $44; *Bambi FC* #186 FN $21; *Captain America Comics* #43 (1944) PR $78; *Captain America* #100 G/VG $13; *Captain Marvel Adventures* #42 VG+ $51, #46 Apparent FN $34; *Captain Midnight* #20 VG+ $37; *Cisco Kid* #1 (1944) G/VG $33; *Comic Cavalcade* #6 (1944) VG $184; *Crime SuspenStories* #14 VG+ $23; *Dick Cole* V1 #2 FA $5; *Donald Duck FC* #203 FN- $77; *Donald Duck FC* #256 VG/F $53; *Donald Duck FC* #282 VG/F $53; *Fantastic Four* #48 GD $53; *Glamorous Romances* #70 VG/F $5; *Great Action Comics* #1 FN- $4; *Great Lover Romances* #18 VG/F $7, #21 FN+ $5; *Helen Of Troy FC* #684 VG/F $10; *Hot Rods and Racing Cars* #1 VG/F $26; *House Of Mystery* #3 FN- $67; *John Carter Of Mars* #1 VF- $24, #2 VG/F $6, #3 VG/F $5; *John Wayne Adventure Comics* #7 VG+ $132, #8 F/VF $189, #9 FN+ $122, #13 GD- $37, #17 VG/F $101; *Journey Into Unknown Worlds* #45 VG $19; *Judo Master* #89 (#1 1966) VF- $10, #90 (#2 1966) FN- $7; *Jungle Adventures* #17 (1964) NM- $14; *Jungle Jim* #13 (1957) VG/F $2, #4 (1955) VG/F $6, #5 (#1 1967) VF $3; *Jungle Thrills* #16 VG+ $44; *Ka-Zar* #1 (1970) VG+ $3; *Little Orphan Annie* Quaker Sparkies giveaway 1941 VG/F $10; *Love Letters* #16 VG $9; *Out Of This World* #4 VG $16; *Planet Comics* #70 (1953) Apparent VG/F $82; *Raggedy Ann and Andy* #10 (1947) Apparent VF- $22; *Sgt Fury* #4 G/VG $10; *Showcase* #35 VG $32, #36 VG $32; *Space 1999* #3 (1976) NM- $2; *Space Squadron* #3 VG+ $42; *Sparkler Comics* #11 (1942) G/VG $19; *Spook Comics* #22 (#1 1953) FN- $49; *Strange Tales* #41 FA $21; *Strange Tales of the Unusual* #1 FA $19, #8 VG $16; *Superman* #100 PR $41; *Taffy* #7 GD $15; *Tales Of The Unexpected* #6 VG $25; *Target Comics* V7 #5 VG $14, V8 #3 VG $6; *True War Romances* #4 VG $5; *Uncanny Tales* #38 VG $12; *Wally (He's The Most)* #3 F/VF $5; *Wedding Bells* #13 FN- $5; *Yellow Claw* #3 FA/GD $46; *Young King Cole* V3 #3 VG $7, V3 #12 VG $10.

Until next time, happy collecting!

Greg White

Comic Books and Collectibles
PO Box 45-0003
Kissimmee, FL 34745
407-870-0400
WEMISSWALT@aol.com

Hello from sunny and mild Central Florida. As the holidays approach sales continue to be hit or miss. I have had some decent sales followed by quiet periods. It is sad to see the negative effect that Internet sales are having on over-the-counter retail.

The retail face of America has changed forever. Personally, I will miss the smaller mom and pop stores that gave this country its retail identity. When is the last time you actually received personal service at a Wal-Mart? We continue to sell vintage comic books, Disneyana and a small selection of vintage toys. I am thankful for my steady group of regular customers who continue to purchase expensive comics—I just wish I had more of them!

Silver Age 1956-1969: Marvels continue to lead the way. Thankfully we have a clientele who will purchase comics in most grades and we continue to move out the popular Marvel and DC titles. The other publishers lag behind in sales. We sell Charlton, Dell, Archie, Harvey and ACG sporadically. No surprise that first appearances and origin issues are in demand. I see more restored key Silver Age books each year. When is Overstreet going to recognize this situation and begin to include restored comics in his price guide?

Recent Sales: *Amazing Spider-Man* #13 GD $85; *Batman* #143 VG $35; *Fantastic Four* #8 FN $300; *Showcase* #9 VG $750; *Tales of Suspense* #49 VF $275.

Golden Age1935-1955: Demand continues for war time and key issues. The problem is that many of the collectors asking cannot afford the books once I produce them. I had a situation last month where a Florida collector insisted on only high grade early 1950s *Detective Comics*. After assuring me that he was serious I brought in a selection of over ten comics from this period in very fine or better unrestored condition. Most of the prices were right on *Guide* or a bit (10%-15%) higher. As soon as this collector saw such a nice selection of just what he was seeking he started nit picking each book and wanted them at 25% to %35 below *Guide*. This is what happens more times than not when you produce expensive books that are just what the customer asked for. Frustrating! We did pick up a nice group of 1940s DC comics from a fellow in Miami who was leaving the hobby.

Recent Sales: *Adventure* #61 FR $825; *Archie* #13 GD $30; *Batman* #7 VG $600; *Capt Marvel* #4 GD $300; *Human Torch* #14 VF $1200.

Not much happening this month on art or toy sales. We did sell a 1964 Aurora Superman in box for $250. A couple Disney animation drawings also sold. It has been a little while since a nice group of pre-1970 comic related toys have come in. Where is that elusive group of 1950s-1960s metal lunch boxes? Oh well, perhaps they will all come in at one time and make my Christmas even merrier! Have a great holiday season. When visiting the Walt Disney World area please stop by and say hello. See you in thirty!

Opinions expressed in CBM *"Market Reports" are solely those of the individual dealers and collectors who contribute them. Prices vary by location, date of transaction and other factors.*

62 That Wonderful Year

by Michelle Nolan

This Month it's 1962

For comic book readers who enjoyed being surprised once or twice a month in the era before the proliferation of fanzines, 1962 was a most wonderful year.

Once or twice a month, a development of real promise would pop up on the newsstands, long before comic book stores developed. Several of these surprises had an enduring impact on comic history.

As 1962 began, readers were still getting over the shock of seeing comic books increase from a dime to 12 cents in the final weeks of 1961. And if you don't think it was a shock, I'll be happy to give you my two cents worth!

The reality was that readers had to adjust to getting four regular-sized comic books for two quarters instead of five, or

AMAZING FANTASY
12¢
15
AUG.
INTRODUCING SPIDER MAN
THOUGH THE WORLD MAY MOCK PETER PARKER, THE TIMID TEEN-AGER...
...IT WILL SOON MARVEL AT THE AWESOME MIGHT OF SPIDER-MAN!
ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:
AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO YOU, FROM THE EDITOR—ABOUT THE MEN, AMAZING!

eight comics for a dollar instead of 10. And I'll bet lots of middle-aged fans will vividly recall that disappointment, since most of us got paid in quarters in those days for tasks such as lawn mowing or baby sitting.

Fortunately, the giant comics were still a quarter. Why? Perhaps publishers figured they could sell more of them than ever, or that they would seem like even bigger bargains than before. I was just grateful that the giants didn't go up to 30 or 35 cents, which would have been logical.

Overall comic book production and sales continued to slip, but only incrementally. Compared with today's numbers, comic book circulations in 1962 were still pretty healthy, with many over 200,000 or 300,000 per issue. One reason: with the gradual demise of so many publishers in the 1950s, there wasn't nearly so much competition in 1962. Comics historian Dan Stevenson's issue-by-issue database shows a post-World War II low of 1,430 newsstand issues published in 1962—fewer than half as many as appeared one decade earlier.

Since the Comics Code Authority symbol began appearing on comics in 1955, no remotely significant new publishing company had emerged. That situation essentially continued during 1962, although when Western split with Dell Publishing at mid-year, it created two "new" companies—Gold Key (the old Western people) and Dell (now on its own, never to be particularly successful with its own creative crew).

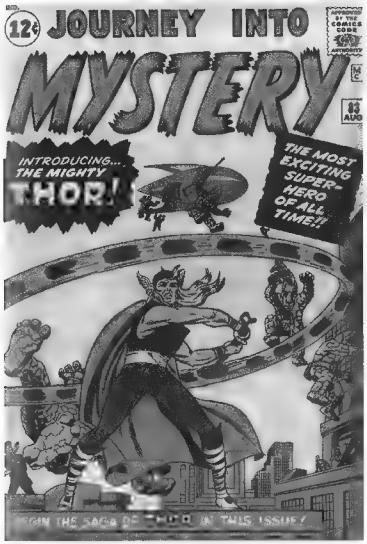
The first Gold Key comics began to appear with October, November and December dates, including two of the early Silver Age non-DC/Marvel costume heroes—the highly original Doctor Solar and longtime newspaper strip favorite The Phantom, who began appearing in original stories courtesy of Western's new Gold Key imprint.

DC, which produced 343 issues covering more than three dozen titles in 1962 and was the steadiest and most important publisher in the industry in

DC
SUPERMAN'S PAL JIMMY OLSEN
12¢
FEB. NO. 285
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
ACTION COMICS
AT LAST-- BY POPULAR DEMAND! SUPERMAN presents SUPERGIRL TO THE WORLD!
WELCOME SUPERGIRL!
SUPERMAN... I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. THEY'RE CHEERING ME!
YOU DESERVE IT, SUPERGIRL! AFTER ALL, YOU ARE THE WORLD'S GREATEST HEROINE!
HOT METRO
CURTIS

1962, came up with one pleasant surprise after another. There was, of course, nothing as monumental as the re-introduction of *The Flash* in *Showcase* #4 six years earlier. The only 1962 development of such significance was left to then second tier publisher Marvel to introduce—when Stan Lee and Steve Ditko came up with Spider-Man, supposedly a "throwaway" character in the final issue of *Amazing Fantasy* #15 (Aug). Now, of course, we all know how much money Marvel would have thrown away if Lee had not decided to publish that first Spider-Man story.

DC's surprises in 1962 included Superman's unveiling of Supergirl to the world, the introduction of the monthly Legion of Super Heroes feature, the first



issues of Aquaman and The Atom, the reappearance of Hawkman after a one-year wait, the second Earth II story, the first Lois Lane annual, and the introduction of the Metal Men.

Not bad for one year! I remember being impressed by each and every one of those developments.

Supergirl was publicly unveiled in *Action Comics* #285 (Feb), nearly three years after Superman discovered he had a cousin but kept her existence a secret to the world at large. More than four years after the Legion of Super Heroes debuted, one of the most popular teams in comics history began appearing regularly in *Adventure Comics* #300 (Sep). For the rest of the decade, through high school and college days, I never missed an appearance of either creation.

I wasn't quite as big a fan of Aquaman, who finally received his own title in 1962 after 21 years as a backup character, or the Silver Age version of The Atom, who got his own comic book only six months after his three-issue tryout in *Showcase*. At that time, I figured it was simply a matter of both characters selling well during their *Showcase* tryouts. Ditto for the Metal Men, a concept I thought was one of the most original in the history of comics. In 1962, they debuted in *Showcase* #37-40 and then had to wait only six months for their own title to appear the next year.

On the other hand, I loved Hawkman and Hawkwoman, and I could not have been more puzzled about their apparent lack of sales success in the DC Universe. Their reappearance in *The Brave and the Bold* #42-44 (after their initial run a year earlier in #34-36) absolutely was the highlight of 1962 for me as a fan. During 1963, I simply could not comprehend DC's reluctance to give them their own title, even though they began a four-issue run in *Mystery in Space* #87 (Nov 1963). But then, Hawkman appeared in every adventure of the Justice Society of America during the Golden Age, yet never had a title to call his own then, either. I guess everyone has a character they love who never made it big.

The other key development of 1962, in my memory anyway, was the second appearance of the Golden Age Flash in *The Flash* #129 (Jun), nine long months after the never-to-be-forgotten "Flash of Two Worlds" epic in #123. Middle-aged fans will remember the frustration of wondering if a captivating character or a good idea would ever be used

again…and I was beginning to despair when I spotted *The Flash* #129 on the stands. It was, indeed, a wonderful year! Who then knew how important this concept would become for DC?

There were three cool 25-cent giants that debuted in 1962 with female favorites—*Lois Lane* from DC, *Millie the Model* from Marvel and *Black Cat* from Harvey. The *Black Cat* issue came out as #63 (Oct), reprinting stories of Harvey's Golden Age glamour girl, Linda Turner, and introducing me to a character I had never heard of. Well, if Wonder Woman could somehow fight criminals in high heels, I guess Black Cat could too! Talk about unreal! But the Black Cat "revival" lasted only three issues, all giants with nothing but reprints.

Back to Marvel: I freely admit that I somehow missed *Amazing Fantasy* #15 on the stands, and I had no idea Spider-man existed until I picked up *Amazing Spider-Man* #1 (Mar 1963). And although I did begin to buy *Fantastic Four* with the first issue (Nov 1961)—simply because it seemed like a cool concept like nothing else in comics—I did not think either *The Incredible Hulk* (six issues in 1962-63) or Ant-Man (*Tales to Astonish* prototype appearance in #27, in costume beginning with #35) were worth paying any attention to.

Thor? That was a different, much more delightful story from Marvel. Other than DC's reintroduction of the Hawks and the Golden Age Flash, what made 1962 a wonderful year for me was the introduction of Thor in *Journey into Mystery* #83 (Aug). What captivating, imaginative stories! For years and years, Marvel's version of the Scandinavian epic captivated this half-Swedish reader!

One of the most obscure, unusual comics of 1962—a Dell giant called *Tales from the Tomb*—contained a batch of eerie little horror stories by John Stanley of Little Lulu fame. I loved this odd comic, just because it was so different from everything else on the stands. I still think the Comics Code would never have approved this, but squeaky clean Dell—of all people—could get away with publishing this strange item.

A wonderful year? What else could you call 1962?

Book Review

by Will Murray

MEN OF TOMORROW: GEEKS, GANGSTERS AND THE BIRTH OF THE COMIC BOOK
Gerard Jones
(Basic Books, 2004) $26.00 hard cover
ISBN 0-465-03656-2

Examinations of the comic book industry have come a long way since Jules Feiffer's ground-breaking *Great Comic Book Heroes* back in 1965, which after all consisted of effusive commentary to support its true goal: reprinting classic Golden Age superhero origins. Back then, comic books as a nostalgic collectable were just beginning to surface in the American popular consciousness. No one was concerned about the roots of so superficial a phenomenon. Few suspected how deep and dark those roots were.

Since that innocent beginning, publishers great and small have issued numerous comics histories, biographies, encyclopedias and reprint compilations until one could easily assemble a small library devoted to a topic which, until comparatively recently, simply didn't exist outside of the disposable comic books themselves. Most of these projects have been of interest only to the dedicated collector or the very casual reader. Rarely has a comics project risen beyond the level of popular culture survey.

Gerard Jones' *Men of Tomorrow* takes the entire subgenre to the next, if not the ultimate level, and puts the previously-published corporate histories of DC and Marvel to shame. This is the saga of a generation of men, born at the dawn of the 20th century, mostly Jewish, often immigrant, poor yet ferociously ambitious, who in fighting their way through the social and professional maze of Depression America, produced a cheap, disposable novelty called the comic book—and birthed the archetypal superhero.

Not since the post-Civil War cowboy era has American popular culture produced such gigantic heroes of the imagination. It doesn't matter that the cowboy was real, if exaggerated and over-glamorized, and the superhero imaginary and impossible. Both are the simple stuff of folklore. The father of them all, the original Man of Tomorrow, Superman, ultimately replaced Wyatt Earp in Hollywood, and in the global imagination.

Men of Tomorrow weaves the biographies of Prohibition bootlegger-printer-pornographer Harry Donenfeld and his accountant Jack Liebowitz, with those of naive Ohio science fiction fans Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, who created the most important and recognizable trademark of the 20th century—and subsequently sold Superman for a song. Following that tangled thread from its humble beginnings, Jones picks up the tortured skeins of Bob Kane and Bill Finger, Jack Kirby and Joe Simon, M. C. Gaines and son, William, and others. While the stark outlines are familiar to students of the era, Jones breaks fresh ground by examining the cultural and financial roots of the men who made the comic book empire. This is the story of comics told right side-up, from the perspective of personality and money, not fantasy.

Narrated in a relentless, factual style, *Men of Tomorrow* rips along in a way guaranteed to hold the interest of the devoted and the disinterested alike. Finally, someone has written a book about the comic book industry that rises to the level of a true history. At last, here is a sweeping account stripped of sentiment, corporate censorship, and nostalgic gloss. Jones tells it like it really was—the creative innocence married to the sometimes sleazy business interests that fed off it, the unbelievably interwoven personal stories that suggest a cosmic predestination, as well as the stupendous successes and cataclysmic collapses that came to characterize the boom-and-bust bonanza that is comic books.

Jones is no outsider taking a microscope to some social anthill. He's written for comic books like *Green Lantern,* not to mention fanzines galore. With his former writing partner, Will Jacobs, he penned a solid 1985 book called *The Comic Book Heroes*. A decade later, he single-handedly rewrote it into an absorbing, gossipy *Hollywood Babylon* of a groundbreaker that may well be one of the best accounts of the inner workings of the modern Superhero Factories prior to *Men of Tomorrow*.

Nor is Jones oblivious of the work of other researchers in the field, as some recent so-called comics "historians" have been. Jones cites sources ranging from *Nemo* to *Comic Book Marketplace.* I was personally gratified to see that my pioneering work delving into the pulp origins of DC Comics did not go in vain. Jones cites my "DC's Tangled Roots" (*Comic Book Marketplace* #53, Nov 1997), as well as the work of *CBM* contributors like Michael Feldman, Robert Beerbohm, and others.

Yet this is not a perfect book.

So fast does Jones' narrative fly that you want to knock him down and spill more juicy details. What's the story behind DC's unpublished *Thrilling Comics*, the aborted companion to *Action Comics?* Who sued Lee Falk, forcing him to move his fledgling Phantom strip from the clichéd urban jungles to Tarzan territory? And I would have liked fuller quotes at critical junctures. There is no substitute to allowing a participant to tell his own story, especially when they are such dramatic passages to be quoted.

And there are the pieces inexplicably left out: Why Martin Goodman jumped from pulps to comic books (the Federal Trade Commission was investigating his pulp line for illegal and deceptive reprinting practices and he was at risk of being shut down). How early DC Comics editor Whit Ellsworth, who once penned pulp novels for Mort Weisinger and Jack Schiff, lured them away from the dying pulp field. Why, after Ellsworth shifted over to Hollywood to produce *Superman* on TV, did DC VP Jack Liebowitz fail for almost a decade to replace him? (He knew neither Schiff nor Liebowitz would stand for the other eclipsing him, and he couldn't afford to lose either.) And the complex reasons Weisinger finally retired from comics are not fully recounted.

But these are minor pieces in the grander puzzle that Jones successfully assembles. By telling the unalloyed truth about the rise of the Man of Steel, Jones manages to chronicle a sub-cultural enterprise that has miraculously evolved into a curious combination of mega-business and quasi-literary global movement. One has only to look to the rise of Chinese, Japanese and Middle Eastern superheroes, and Hollywood's slate of forthcoming films—*The Fantastic Four, X-Men 3, Spider-Man 3,* as well as new *Superman* and *Batman* adaptations—to realize that superheroes have become, at long last, Important.

Men of Tomorrow chronicles how and why. This book is a must-read for everyone interested in comics, popular culture, mass media, and the significant cultural role of Jewish-Americans in the U. S. A.

Now if Jones—or someone—will only do the same for Martin Goodman, Stan Lee, and Marvel Comics, and the parallel enterprise of his former partner and ultimate rival, Archie Comics' Louis Silberkleit, the formative history of the comic book will be complete.

Inspiration Central: Yeates

[continued from page 20]

www.comicon.com/yeates. My recent published work includes laying out and doing backgrounds for Cary Nord on *Conan* for Dark Horse, *Ragnarok Paradise X* special, *Beasts* and *Cap Universe X* specials for Marvel. I also just finished editing a 224 page book on Al Williamson's career focusing on the fifties and featuring over 100 pages of complete stories shot from the original art [see "A Walking Tour of *Al Williamson: Hidden Lands* in this issue of *CBM*]. Next up I'm excited to be penciling and inking an *Escapist* story that Chris Offut wrote.

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

BACK ISSUE DEPARTMENT

These issues are available...

#65	Pre-Code Crime, Bob Kane	$8
#72	Iron Man & Subby, Larry Lieber Part I	$8
#73	Warren Horror, Larry Lieber Part II	$8
#79	Blue Beetle, Fred Guardineer, Captain Action	$8
#83	Magnus, Saturn Girl, Plastic Man	$8
#84	Morrow, Ditko, Romita Sr., Brainiac	$8
#85	Eisner, Manning, Whitman Mystery Part I	$8
#86	Perez Part I, Bronze Age, Whitman Mystery Part II	$8
#87	George Evans, Detectives Inc.	$8
#88	Murphy Anderson, Rudolph	$8
#89	Hal Foster, Frank Cho, George Perez Part II	$8
#90	Patriotic issue, Bob Lubbers, George Perez Part III	$8
#91	Johnny Craig, Harry "A" Chesler	$8
#92	Joe Kubert, Eddie Stanky, Mary Worth	$8
#93	Alex Raymond, Flash Gordon, Gail Simone	$8
#94	GA Green Lantern, Spectre, Perez Wrap-up	$8
#95	Disney strip art, Miracleman	$8
#96	Milton Caniff, Marc Hempel	$8
Sp #5	Spider-Man, Gerber Sticker Set #8	$12
#97	Curt Swan, T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents	$8
#98	Western: Dick Ayers, Graham Ingels, John Severin	$8
#99	Marvel 1965, Iron Man, Hulk, Transformers	$8
#100	Charles Schulz, H. J. Ward, Pulp Roots of Batman	$8
#101	Archie, Butch Guice, CrossGen	$8
#102	Lev Gleason, Russ Heath, Commercial Comics Co.	$8
#103	Disney Comics, Jack Bradbury, Don Rosa	$8
#104	Batman, Neal Adams, Loeb & Lee, Lew Schwartz	$9
#105	Wrightson, Kaluta, Jeffrey Jones, Bruce Jones	$9
#106	Good Girl Art, Rima, Cat Girl, John Celardo	$9
#107	Victor Fox, Aquaman's Paul Norris	$9
#108	End of DC's SA, Geo. Carlson, GA Black Market	$9
#109	GA Villains, Neal Adams Pt. 2, Infantino	$9
#110	Ross, Saunders, Kirby, Wildey, Snyder III	$9
#111	SA Villains, Paul Gulacy, Jim Starlin	$9
#112	Atlas Horror, Alan Class Comics	$9
#113	Nedor, Geo. Pratt, Milt Story, Flying Saucers	$9
#114	Dark Horse Horror, , DC Horror, Robert Tinnell	$9
#115	Barks, Rosa, Eisner, Feldstein, Stanley	$9

Prices include postage.
Add $2 each for orders outside U.S.
MD (5%) & MO (6.975%) add sales tax.
MasterCard, VISA orders call 800 322 7978.

CBM BACK ISSUES
GEMSTONE PUBLISHING
PO BOX 469
WEST PLAINS, MO 65775-0469

Irwin Donenfeld 1926-2004

[Official DC Press Release]

Irwin Donenfeld, former Executive Vice President and Editorial Director for DC Comics, died on November 30 at age 78 of heart failure in Norwalk Hospital in Connecticut. Donenfeld's editorial instincts and business skills helped guide DC Comics from the late 1940s until the late 1960s.

Paul Levitz, DC's President and Publisher, says, "Fans of the Silver Age of comics owe Irwin a debt both for his influence on DC's publishing program and especially for his decision to preserve the film negatives of DC's titles—making possible the beloved 80 Page Giant Annuals and 100-Page Super Spectaculars in a time when recreating or scanning comic art was prohibitively expensive."

The son of Harry Donenfeld, one of the founders of the publishing company that would become DC Comics, Irwin Donenfeld was born March 1, 1926, in the Bronx. He joined DC (then Detective Comics) in 1948, not long after the company's merger with sister publisher All American Comics.

As Donenfeld reminisced during a panel discussion in 2001 at Comic-Con International: San Diego, "In 1948, I was already married and had a child. I graduated from college and went up to DC and I showed them that I was a college graduate; I had a keen intellect, and they hired me because my father was the boss."

From the start, Donenfeld applied himself to two crucial sides of the industry: business and editorial. This approach began with his work with distribution, it is widely believed, when he received reports from representatives who reported the types of magazines that were selling around the country. This input guided Donenfeld to recommend that DC publish comics in those genres. In the late 1940s, with the popularity of super-heroes waning, Donenfeld led DC into more diverse genres, starting with westerns, and later expanding into romance, crime, war, mystery and science fiction.

Donenfeld served as DC's Editorial Director from 1952 to 1957, overseeing the company's publishing at the start of the Silver Age of Comics. From 1958 to 1967 he was Executive Vice President and Business Manager. In 1967 DC was purchased by Kinney National Services. Donenfeld soon retired to Westport, Connecticut, where he became involved in maritime business.

Donenfeld is survived by his wife, Carole; his sister, Peach Mondschein; his children, Amy, Ben, Harry and Luke Donenfeld, and Mimi Foss; as well as three grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

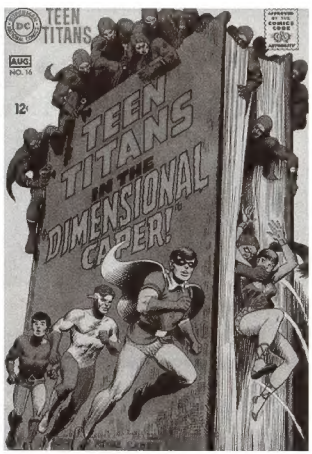
Bob Haney 1926-2004

[Official DC Press Release]

Bob Haney, one of DC's mainstay writers in the Silver Age of Comics, died on November 25 at the age of 78 of complications from a stroke at a hospital in El Cajon, California. Haney is best remembered as the writer of *The Teen Titans*, *The Brave and the Bold* and other DC series in the 1950s and 1960s.

After receiving an M.A. from Columbia University in New York, Haney began his writing career in the late 1940s, working for publishers including Fawcett, Fox, Harvey, Hillman, Quality, Ziff-Davis, Dell, St. John and others. Through the Silver Age of Comics he wrote numerous stories for *All-American Men of War* and *Star Spangled War Stories*, as well as *Brave and Bold* team-ups, *Blackhawk*, *Tomahawk*, *Suicide Squad*, and stories of The Unknown Soldier, Green Arrow and many others. He contributed some of the earliest Sgt. Rock scripts to *Our Army at War*, and is credited as co-creator of Eclipso, Metamorpho, and the original Teen Titans. Haney retired to Baja, Mexico in the mid-1980s.

"Bob was a gentleman of eclectic interests who brought his curiosity about the world to his stories," says Paul Levitz, DC's Publisher and President. "I grew up with his work on classic series like *Teen Titans*, for which he wrote the first several years of stories, and had the pleasure of being his editor on many war and super-hero stories. Both experiences left me with great respect and fondness for Bob."



Look into the FUTURE...

HERITAGE COMICS

Featuring the Richard and Wendy Pini Collection!

Dr. Strange © Marvel Characters, Inc.

Heritage Comics' first sale of 2005, to be held February 11-12 in Dallas, TX, is shaping up to be our best yet, with tons of great comics, memorabilia and cool original art!

Kelly Freas
Digital Medusa

Chesley Bonestall
Original Oil Painting

William Stout
Tyrannosaurus Rex

We'll also be offering the first part of THE NORTHERN LIGHTS COLLECTION, an incredible assemblage of pedigreed and high-grade comics, including impressive runs of AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, BATMAN, and more! The second part of this spectacular collection will be offered in our Spring Sale, May 19-20, 2005 in New York City.

There's still time to consign to what will certainly be a landmark sale! Just call or write Ed Jaster (EdJ@HeritageComics.com) at 214-252-4288 or Lon Allen (LonA@HeritageComics.com) at 214-252-4 Grey Smith (GreySM@HeritageComics.com) for movie material at 214-668-6928 today. The earliest consignments get the most publicity, so make that call NOW!

SOS

And be sure to join our free comics community (over 30,000 members and growing fast) at:

HERITAGECOMICS.COM

3500 Maple Avenue • 17th Floor • Dallas, Texas 75219-3941 • 214-528-3500 • 1-800-872-6467 • Fax: 214-443-8411

CGC Comics Guaranty, L

COMING ATTRACTIONS

LOOK WHAT'S COMING UP IN THE NEXT FEW ISSUES OF CBM!

SUBSCRIBE NOW! YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO MISS THESE!

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE #119

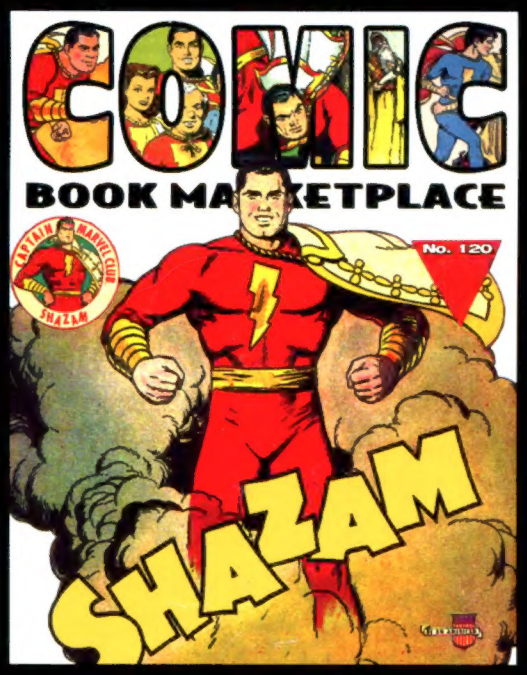
Comic Book Marketplace #119 examines the crossovers between network radio shows and comic books. Also this issue, the second part of our examination of illustration great Norman Saunders.

Will Murray examines The Green Hornet in comics and movie serials.

Will Murray reveals "The Secret Comics Career of Walter Gibson."

Steve Kronenberg concludes his analysis of illustrator Norm Saunders' art with a look at his work in comics and with Topps Trading Cards.

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE #120



Comic Book Marketplace #120: Captain Marvel was created by C.C. Beck, right? No, it was Roscoe Fawcett, right? No, it was Al Allard or Ralph Daigh, right? No, it was Bill Parker, right? And what did Fred MacMurray have to do with it? And Pete Costanza? The correct answer is…all of the above played a role in creating the Big Red Cheese, the 'World's Mightiest Mortal,' and our Will Murray will explain in a new major article about the rise and fall of Captain Marvel.

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE #121

Comic Book Marketplace #121 will delve into the secret world of The Phantom. Created by writer Lee Falk and artist Ray Moore for the comic pages back in 1936, this mysterious character has appeared in movies, serials, pulps, on the radio, and is currently undergoing a resurgence of interest because of artist Paul Ryan's great Phantom art for the European publisher Egmont. We'll have an interview with Paul from John R. Stuart, plus our usual assortment of features and color pages.